

**THE ROLE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN  
EKURHULENI SOUTH DISTRICT**

By

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

**MASTERS IN EDUCATION**

In the subject

**EDUCATION MANAGEMENT**

At the

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

SUPERVISOR: **PROF M LEKHETHO**

AUGUST 2019

## DECLARATION

STUDENT NUMBER: 48716235

I, Babalwa Linda Gwele, declare that the dissertation titled: **THE ROLE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN EKURHULENI SOUTH DISTRICT** is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it for examination at UNISA for another qualification or any other higher education institution.

SIGNATURE: .....

Date: .....

BL Gwele

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated:

- in loving memory of my late parents, Mninawe Cromwell Gwele and Nokhwezi Deborah Gwele who anticipated to see my success in the academic journey, and
- to my handsome boys, Siqalo and Bonani for their constant support and love.

Above all, I give honour to my God for the ability, strength and wisdom He gave me.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I will forever be grateful to:

- My humble supervisor Prof Mapheleba Lekhetho, for your patience, guidance and encouragement in the journey. Your words of encouragements propelled me to run the race until the finished line. You gave me confidence by believing in me. Thank you.
- Gauteng Department of Education for giving permission to conduct this study.
- All the principals, deputy principals, heads of departments and teachers, who allowed me to conduct research in their schools.
- Dr S. Mgquba, Dr C. Rwodzi and Prof M.M Sefotho for your guidance when the ship was sinking.
- Family and friends for strengthening me and your undiluted love.

## **ABSTRACT**

The study explores the role of school principals in teacher professional development in Ekurhuleni South District and whether they perform their leadership functions as expected. Literature reviewed gave an in-depth understanding of the discourse of teacher professional development from the South African and international perspectives. A qualitative approach was adopted to explore the role of school principals in teacher professional development. Ten primary schools were selected from Ekurhuleni South District using purposive sampling. In each school, the principal, deputy principal, head of department and a post level teacher were interviewed to gather data. The findings of the study revealed that there is little or no support from principals to assist teachers in order to enhance teaching and learning. A lack of resources and development opportunities for principals by their superiors hampers teacher professional development. The main recommendation from this study is that principals should be supported by their cluster leaders, and the school governing bodies should supplement the school funds so that teachers can attend workshops.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ANA	Annual National Assessments
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
CMM	Curriculum Management Model
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GPLMS	Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy
HOD	Heads of Departments
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
OBE	Outcomes-based education
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
PGP	Professional Growth Plan
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SASAMS	South African School Administration and Management System
SBA	School-Based Assessment
SDT	Staff development team
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TPD	Teacher professional development
WSD	Whole School Development

## **CHAPTER 1:**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

School principals are considered to be leaders who should portray distinctive professionalism in their schools. The principal is the key person determining whether a school succeeds in terms of learner achievement. The centrality of principals in managing educational activities within schools is emphasised by several scholars (Briggs & Sommefeldt, 2002:106; Van Deventer & Kruger, 2005:02). There are several traits that good principals must possess to do their job effectively and efficiently. However, ineffective managerial skills by some school principals who are either passive or ignorant in performing their roles in teacher professional development (TPD) hinder the success of learner achievement. Some of the professional requirements needed to be a good principal include the ability to exhibit leadership and take responsibility for both success and failure. Principals are expected to improve the overall quality of the school in all aspects of curriculum implementation and school administration. One of the aspects that needs to be developed in teachers is classroom delivery competence. Constant curriculum changes necessitated by shifts in policy and global trends require the up-skilling of teachers.

Han and Yin (2016:6) contend that in order to facilitate effective functioning of schools, principals must play a vital role in motivating teachers who are frustrated and demotivated by frequent changes. They must lead the staff in shaping an environment in which teachers can do their work best. Principals are expected to be committed in identifying teachers' needs, supporting and advising them, disseminating information, shaping and maintaining the creative talents of teachers, and organising and facilitating suitable training to meet their needs (Bredson & Johansson, 2000:385; Holland, 2009:217; Moswela, 2006:631). Han and Yin (2016:6) and Murthy (2003:1) are of the view that teachers need the full support of, and motivation from their managers. However, the success of support and motivation provided by principals and teachers can only be achieved in a school environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.

Ideally, "a conducive school environment should be characterised by goal focus, synergised communication, decentralised power, effective utilisation of resources, cohesiveness,

adaptation and sound morale” (Dayson, 2016:46). To build such atmosphere, principals should first embrace and show commitment to curriculum change, and not perceive it as an imposition from the school leadership above, with which they are merely expected to comply (Dayson, 2016:46). Principals should also involve teachers in decision-making processes and be concerned about their development and provide adequate resources. This can heighten and help sustain teacher morale and commitment to reforms (Mulkeen, Chapman, Dejaeghere, Leu & Brynek, 2005:303). Bredson and Johansson (2000:385) emphasise that principals must understand that a school’s success and its improvement require a focus on TPD. Principals must encourage, nurture and support teacher learning and not become the gatekeepers of TPD. A system and its associated activities can only be implemented fruitfully by those with a working knowledge of them. In order for principals to close the developmental gap, they should not guess the content needs of teachers. Rather, they should provide professional development that addresses a need for self-direction, the teachers’ particular needs, and the desire to apply what is learned, creating situations where teachers dialogue with one another within their schools or in neighbouring schools, sharing knowledge gained in professional development sessions (Irby, Guerrero, Tong & Rodriguez, 2010:8). Principals should ensure that all teachers in their schools are kept abreast of curricular developments. Therefore, they have to lead all teachers ensuring that their challenges are addressed, by helping to provide meaningful, relevant and effective professional development opportunities as instructional leaders (Payne & Wolfson, 2000:14).

According to Hellsten, Noonan and Prytula (2013:48), among the primary roles of principals, instructional leadership seems to be the most fundamental one. Instructional leadership represents the principal’s efforts in increasing student achievement through optimal instructional practices and initiatives. They further state that principals, as office bearers, are to serve as leaders for student learning and become knowledgeable about academic content and pedagogical techniques that work with teachers in strengthening their skills. In the same vein, Garand (2014:48) stresses that successful accomplishment of school goals requires new ways of thinking, new assignments of responsibility and new developmental approaches by the school principals. This is manifested in the form of collegial discussions among subject departments, vertical teams or horizontal teams, often facilitated by the principal. Hoy and Miskel (2008:25) state that “instructional leadership encompasses those actions that the

principal takes and delegates to others to promote growth in student learning”. The function of the principal as an instructional leader is to facilitate effective teaching and learning, organise effective teacher development programmes, create a positive school climate, exercise effective management behaviour, and overcome constraints from the community. An instructional leader provides direction for the team, “inspires and energises the team, motivates and mediates educational policy to the team, mentors and supports the team and monitors their progress” (Mason, 2004:21).

There are a number of new policy initiatives in South Africa that were introduced as part of a national attempt to create a more enabling environment for TPD by principals at schools. These include the establishment of a professional regulating body, namely the South African Council for Educators (SACE) (Department of Basic Education, 2011:4). It is important to consider how this policy on teacher education conceptualises the role of principals, and the extent to which its recommendations are likely to sustain a reconceptualised view of TPD.

Smith (2003:352) assert that principals should create opportunities to give teachers time off for improving their qualifications, search for bursaries for further study, encourage teachers to apply for study leave, and allow teachers to gain content depth by teaching the same learning area over a considerable period of time. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9(NCS) (Department of Education [DoE], 2006:4) underscores the importance of a change of ethos among teachers as a basis for effective implementation of the principles of teacher development. It further states that professional development must be largely self-initiated and principals must coordinate their own programmes if these are to lead to sustainable improvements in the quality of the schooling system. In essence, principals must play a role in the development of teachers in schools.

## **1.2 TEACHERS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT IN A TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Globally, societies have acknowledged that teachers are the key agents in the quality and transformation of an education system (Villegas-Reimers, 2003:42), and as such, they need to be developed. As professionals, they grow, evolve and emerge “through the long-term and day-to-day work they do. That is why job-embedded learning opportunities need to be the focal point of all professional development efforts. They need support from their principals and peers throughout these opportunities” (Zepeda, 2012:17). Teachers are linchpins that

enhance learning in schools (Iheanachor, 2007:16). Their task is to prepare learners for proper adulthood through the leadership of their principals. In this way, the value of the principal's hard work is cultivated in children and displayed in their learning, and it takes years to be fully realised as children complete their formal education (Masote, 2016:68).

In the light of the above assertion, it is apparent that teachers' priority is to sharpen learners' intellectual skills and shape their morals. Silverton (2015:53) emphasises that adequate subject knowledge is necessary for teachers to be successful. To achieve this, they should study educational matters within their relevant fields in order to grow professionally and understand how to teach their particular subjects effectively. As Steyn (2009:41) proposes, these can be attained if they are involved in helping to determine their individual development or training needs. In this same way, Muller (2009:172) advocates that teachers should develop their own Professional Growth Plan (PGP). The belief is that their involvement can enhance the success and effectiveness of the professional development programme through the realisation of learners' needs and changes in teaching approaches and paradigms. The key focus in their developmental programmes should be academic subject knowledge, learning determined by teachers' individual interests and other learning opportunities that engage teachers' creative and reflective capacities.

Furthermore, Cuban (2003:45) believes that teachers are the most fundamental human resource for creating good schools. They should be subject specialists capable of providing a service and developing teaching and learning material. In order for this goal to be attained, principals should work in harmony with their subordinates and encourage them towards the attainment of such a culture (Sedibe & Fraser, 2012:151). Teachers have a responsibility to ensure that learners gain knowledge and skills they require to become effective learners. In order to instil these skills effectively and efficiently, Polly and Hannafin (2010:34) contend that teachers must be afforded opportunities to develop key understandings and skills, rarely evident in most professional development programmes.

The primary role of teachers is to teach. However, Kimathi and Rusznyak (2018:63) expressed concern that the current crop of teachers in South Africa lacks required competencies and many need professional development in order to teach effectively. For Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009:18), a lack of resources and diminishing interest in teaching inhibit the



supply of suitably qualified teachers in schools. The presence of demotivated teachers and incompetent practitioners requires the Department of Basic Education to support teachers through professional development programmes to enhance their competencies and quality. In this regard, Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009:18) maintain that the teachers' fundamental role is to provide quality education to students and communities; hence, investing in teachers through TPD may have more positive effects on individual learners and the school than investing in other physical resources.

The role of the teacher is to form a circle of relationships with parents and children with the aim of forming a mutual community of learners among them. Teachers are the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement; therefore, they should be equipped with skills to have greater confidence in teaching their subjects, and to become proficient in new teaching strategies and approaches to learning. The position of the teacher in the process is changing from that of being the dispenser of knowledge and complete authority, to that of being the facilitator of the construction of knowledge by the learners themselves (Fraser & Gestwicki, 2000:105). In essence, teachers are the main intermediaries between the real world and the ideal world (Sedibe & Fraser, 2012:152). However, this facilitation is difficult for teachers as they are faced with the significance of their role as agents of change. Many teachers in South Africa are overwhelmed by the effects of curriculum change and innovation. They are suffering in those classrooms as they lack knowledge in terms of subject content and delivery.

Powerful professional development deepens teachers' subject-area knowledge. For this reason, Shulman (1986:97) reiterates that it is important for teachers to possess deep knowledge of the subjects they teach. They should improve the knowledge and pedagogical skills in their disciplines and provide insights to learners with misconceptions in the content. However, teachers want principals who are supportive of the work they do and the challenges they face because of the evolving reforms. They need to be heard and supported in their learning endeavours by their principals, as this is the latter's role (Zepeda, 2012:27).

### **1.3 TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

According to Gulston (2010:28), "the success of standards-based reform depends on teachers' ability to foster both basic knowledge and advanced thinking and problem-solving among

their students". Professional development is always aimed at becoming better in terms of the acquisition of new skills, attitudes and knowledge. These developments in education should entail the improvement of knowledge, skills and attitudes to better the quality of education provided (Gulston, 2010:28). Both newly appointed and experienced teachers in the teaching fraternity need to participate in these developments in order to keep abreast of curriculum changes.

The developmental programmes happen throughout the career of teachers, and during these activities, the knowledge, skills and competences of teachers are enhanced (Gulston, 2010:27). Bredson and Johansson (2000:385) regard TPD as the learning opportunities that engage teachers' creative and reflective capacities to strengthen their practices. Therefore, teacher development is critical for teachers as it provides them with knowledge and skills to improve student achievement (Payne & Wolfson, 2000:14), as well as the potential to greatly affect teachers' abilities to teach and assist them to achieve the mission and vision of the school (Loeb, Beteille & Kalogrides, 2009:88).

According to Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon and Birman (2002:24), TPD is an essential mechanism for deepening teachers' content knowledge and developing their teaching practices. In this sense, professional development could be regarded "as a cornerstone of systemic reform efforts designed to increase teachers' capacity to teach at high standards". Effective professional development is logically embedded in the reality of schools and teachers' work. In this respect, Harwell (2011:18) states that effective "professional development should be based on curricular and instructional strategies that have a high probability of affecting student learning" and student ability to learn.

Professional development should deepen teachers' knowledge of the learning areas they teach, sharpen their teaching skills in the classroom, and assist them to keep up with developments in their individual fields, and in education generally. "It should also help to generate and contribute new knowledge to the profession and increase the ability to monitor students' work in order to provide constructive feedback to students and appropriately redirect teaching. Professional development should always address identified gaps in student achievement" (Harwell, 2011:19). The content of professional development should centre on subject matter, close the identified gaps, address pedagogical weaknesses within the

organisation, measure student performance accurately, and ask professional questions that are relevant to the setting in which professional development is delivered.

Harwell (2011:19) further contends that TPD is a process, not an event or occasion. It is not a once-off intervention. It is based on sound educational practices like contextual teaching. The context of effective professional development is characterised by a shared sense of need for change. Contextual teaching presents information in familiar contexts, and in contexts in which the information is useful. It is effective because it is based on the idea that learning occurs best when learners process new information or knowledge in such a way that it makes sense to them in their own frames of reference. In essence, contextual teaching through professional development can be as effective in changing teacher behaviours of both novice and experienced teachers as contextual teaching in the classroom, and it is effective in improving student behaviours (Harwell, 2011:19). It stands to reason that principals need to understand this reality and the role they need to play as far as the development of their teachers is concerned.

As explained in the instrument for developmental appraisal, the DoE (1998:3) defines TPD as the extent to which a teacher acquires new skills and expertise not only in his or her own learning area, but more particularly in educational thinking, school management, vocational and technical areas. In the same way, Day and Sammons (2014:52) view TPD as the provision of activities designed to enhance the knowledge, skills and understandings of teachers in ways that lead to changes in their thinking and classroom behaviour. Steyn and van Niekerk (2002:250) concur that professional development is an ongoing development programme that focuses on the whole range of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to educate learners effectively.

Villegas-Reimers (2003:53) argues that “the processes of TPD have a significant positive impact on teachers’ beliefs and practices, students’ learning, and the implementation of educational reforms”. TPD opportunities are needed for teachers, not only because they promote the recognition of their work as professionals, but also because they create new insights into the knowledge of content, opportunities for growth, exploration, learning and development. Dean (1991:1) maintains that TPD is an ongoing process, a continuous developmental activity, and an increase in some form of professionalism that includes inter

alia, becoming a self-regulated, flexible, and reflective practitioner who can monitor his or her own learning in accordance with the demands of the teaching profession.

Teachers need to be equipped with skills to have greater confidence in teaching their subjects, and to become proficient in new teaching strategies and approaches to learning. The school principal is deemed to be the main professional person who can execute this task. Wang and Odell (2002:62) highlighted that the school principals generally lack consistency in executing teacher education programmes. To address this, they proposed that they should play a proactive and transformative role, which requires them to develop, nurture, and help both new and experienced teachers to understand the school culture and assist them to transfer and adjust what they have learned in their teacher education programmes to the school context.

#### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Many changes have occurred within the South African education system since 1994 due to systemic evaluation of the sector. Grobler (2003:28) indicates that the South African education system has undergone major changes, and therefore, the advisory services offered to teachers should have changed accordingly.

Howell and Sayed (2018:178) opine that both pre-service and in-service teachers are challenged by the changes in the curriculum, that is, the replacement of content-based education with outcomes-based education (OBE), Curriculum 2005 (C2005) and the Revised National Curriculum Statement. They further argue that “the implementation of C2005 took place in an environment characterised by enormous infrastructural backlogs, resource limitations, inadequate supply of quality learning materials, and the absence of common national standards” of teacher development, learning and assessment.

This programme was perceived as a content-based, new approach for teachers. However, teachers at schools frequently complain that even facilitators appointed by the district offices and their principals also had challenges in understanding and implementing the new measures (Gulston, 2010:28). For Bagudela (2012:14), principals, as educational leaders, have failed to carry out their responsibility in supporting, guiding and mentoring teachers as the drivers of the process of change from the old to the new curriculum.

As Jita and Mokhele (2008:24) observed, in South Africa, the third new curriculum after 1994, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), was designed to encourage the learning of conceptually demanding subject matter. While “this new curriculum has brought the necessary drive for change in some schools, others have continued to wrestle in their attempts to provide quality instruction” (Howell & Sayed, 2018:177). CAPS was first implemented in the Foundation Phase and Grade 10 in 2010 and by 2013 should have been implemented throughout all phases. However, as had happened before with other curriculum statements, there was little or no training of teachers by their principals at schools.

Partly because of a lack of TPD, some schools in Gauteng have been identified as underperforming. Curriculum change has not been matched with teacher training programmes and skilling them with requisite competences for change. Workshops on change awareness are not adequate for preparing teachers for curriculum change.

The Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) has been developed by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) to support and improve the results of the underperforming schools. GPLMS arose after an analysis of the Annual National Assessments (ANA) report where all Grade 6 learners in Gauteng Province wrote the same examination in English Language and Mathematics. The report found that the pass rate for Language was 29% and 23% for Mathematics in 2010.

As a result, some schools in the Ekurhuleni South District that were affected were part of the plan devised by GDE to improve English Language and Mathematics, since they are regarded as crucial subjects if learners are to be successful in their future careers.

Teachers in identified underperforming schools are provided with lesson plan templates that are detailed without considering the different contexts in which learning and teaching occur. They are told to implement them as given. In line with GPLMS, schools have been provided with coaches that are supposed to support and develop them in curriculum delivery in their classrooms. However, some of the coaches that have been deployed to primary schools do not have experience in primary school teaching and some are not trained to teach primary school learners. In this sense, some GPLMS coaches simply become observers when teachers are teaching.

Teachers were not involved in the development of the GPLMS lesson plans or in the decision to adopt them. In the process, in order to comply with the policy directive, some teachers simply teach learners what they do not even understand themselves. In order for schools to be transformed and improved, principals should ensure that teachers understand what they are doing (Bagudela, 2012:14). This research attempts to investigate different forms of teacher development initiatives and their impact on whole-school performance. It seeks to interrogate the modes of delivery of teacher development programmes and to identify the effective roles that can be played by the principals towards transforming the education sector.

Some of the key pointers of the main problem that this study seeks to investigate include the following:

- the quality of TPD programmes has been inconsistent;
- crash workshops have been run, and there is the wrong placement of facilitators, trainers and coaches resulting in poor preparation for curriculum change;
- ineffective managerial skills by some school principals who are either passive or ignorant in performing their roles in TPD; and
- there has been no consensus on what constitutes quality educational service (Harwell, 2011:19).

Yariv (2011:228) states that one of the most important external sources of weak academic performance in schools from both learners and teachers is “poor management skills and a lack of adequate supervision. Some principals lack general leadership skills or simply fail to deal effectively with teachers’ difficulties. They do not take corrective measures at early stages when such guidance might still help”. Rather, they also blame their predecessors who may have blocked the ability to cope with incompetent teachers or were reluctant to confront or to give them necessary assistance. In this regard, Leithwood and Louis (1998:86) add that some principals acknowledge their responsibility to foster TPD; however, they occasionally claim that it is not a function they feel capable of performing even though they are instructional leaders. When these principals do not invest in developing their staff, some teachers’ initial shortcomings worsen. In order to bring the research problem that this study

seeks to address into sharp focus, it is framed into research questions and objectives of the study below.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.5.1 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION**

What is the role of principals in teacher professional development in Ekurhuleni South Primary Schools?

### **1.5.2 Sub-questions**

- How do principals perceive their roles in teacher development?
- What kind of professional development support do principals give to teachers?
- What are the principals' future plans for teachers concerning TPD in their schools?

## **1.6 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

As highlighted in the problem formulated above, the general aim of this study is to explore how principals perceive and understand their roles in teacher development in schools.

The study seeks to:

- Establish how school principals perceived their role in teacher development programmes.
- Identify the kind of support given by principals in teacher performance in schools.
- Provide insights into the relevance of future plans of teachers in TPD.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

### **1.7.1 Research Methodology**

This study applies a qualitative research methodology. De Vos (2002:29) states that qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours and social contexts of particular populations. It is more concerned with social phenomena from the perspective of participants.

Creswell (2003:47) states that "qualitative research is a type of educational research where the researcher relies on the views of participants, asks broad general questions, collects data

consisting largely of words from participants, describes and analyses these words or themes and conducts the enquiry in a subjective, biased manner". This form of research also allows the researcher to find out about the feelings, views and thoughts of the participants. "Qualitative research emphasises the dynamic, holistic and individual aspects of the human experience, and it attempts to capture those aspects in their entirety, within the context of those who are experiencing them" (Creswell, 2003:47).

The reports of this design are usually rich with detail and provide meaningful insights into participants' experiences of the world. The principal and teachers should be able to discuss and explore their understandings and experiences in terms of TPD in schools. In this study, the researcher did not want to speculate about the principals' role in TPD but sought to understand the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives as they described their experiences.

Patton (2001:39) also emphasises that qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach seeking to understand a natural fact in specific settings in the real world. In this way, the researcher cannot attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest. In fact, Patton (1990), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Eisner (1991) have identified the following important characteristics of qualitative research:

- The natural setting or context is used as the source of data. The researcher attempts to conduct research in a manner that will maintain empathic neutrality. Observations, descriptions and interpretations of contextually situated data are used.
- The researcher becomes the human instrument as the data collector.
- Descriptive, expressive language is used in the research reports, which allows for the presence of voice in the text.
- Qualitative research is interpretive and attempts to discover the meaning in experiences or events, and in turn, the researcher interprets the meaning.
- Each study is treated as unique.
- The design of qualitative research tends to be emergent rather than predetermined, and as a result, researchers focus on this emerging process as well as the outcomes or product of the research. This makes it difficult for the researcher to observe and interpret



meanings in context; the emergent nature of qualitative research design makes it difficult to finalise research strategies before data collection has begun.

- This design is judged using specific criteria for reliability and validity.

### **1.7.2 Research Design**

A case study was used to generate data in Ekurhuleni South primary schools in this study. A case study design examines a bounded system or a case over time in detail. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the concerned parties. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:374-375) state that case studies are used by qualitative researchers as a strategy for choosing sites and participants for beginning data collection, which is concerned with an in-depth understanding of one phenomenon chosen by the researcher.

In this instance, the researcher needs to understand the role of principals in terms of TPD. Nieuwenhuis (2007:75) posits that a case study strives towards a comprehensive understanding of how participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation, and how they make meaning of a phenomenon. I need to know how principals develop their teachers so that they can keep abreast of the changes in curriculum.

### **1.8 POPULATION**

“A population is the totality of persons, events, organisation units, case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned”. De Vos (2002:107) contends that population refers to “individuals in the universe who possess specific characteristics”. Population is the term for the collectivity that we plan to study and about which we want to make statements (Rossouw, 2003:105). It is also used to describe the total number of cases of this type, which is the subject of the study (Walliman, 2011:40).

The population of this study consisted of the school principal, one deputy principal, one head of department (HOD) of each phase and one teacher in each school. Principals were interviewed because they are leaders of schools and instructional leaders. They are expected to initiate and coordinate programmes of TPD schools.

Teachers in stipulated grades were interviewed as they were dual professionals who had to go through ongoing professional development programme that promoted their competences

in curriculum development, delivery and evaluation, classroom management and teaching skills.

### **1.9 SAMPLE SIZE**

Purposive sampling was used to purposefully select participants who were deemed to be information-rich in order to understand the research problem in depth. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:175), this implies deciding which people will be possible to select to represent the wider group. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:22) explain that purposeful sampling is when cases are specifically selected for the understanding that can be derived from an in-depth study of the small samples that they contain.

In this process, the information that is obtained from a small group can be used in a number of ways as the samples that are chosen are selected on the usefulness of the knowledge and information that they can contribute to a study. The researcher has to decide on the group of appropriate questions, the context which is important for the research, the time period that will be needed and the possible artefacts of interest to the investigator.

Purposive sampling was used as the researcher used her own judgement about which participants to select, choosing only those that met the purpose of the study. Relevant participants were selected, and included school principal, one deputy principal, one head of department (HOD) of each phase and two teachers in each school, that is one Foundation Phase teacher and one Intermediate Phase teacher. In order to maintain confidentiality, the names of the participants were not disclosed.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:319) postulate that a sample size is assessed according to the following criteria:

- The purpose of the study;
- The research problem;
- How the data is to be collected; and
- Information availability.

### **1.10 DATA COLLECTION**

This is the stage where the researcher begins to 'hear', 'see' and 'read' what is going on rather than just listening and looking through documents (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:374-375). Data was collected with the aim of finding out how principals perceived their role in professional development in schools. Teachers were given a chance to express their experiences in terms of their development.

Data collection also involves face-to-face interviews with participants. Interviews allowed the researcher to maximise opportunities for objectivity and for the results to be valid and reliable. Breakwell, Smith and Wright (1990:230) and Kvale and Mouton (1996:11) noted that interviews are useful for the generation of knowledge through the use of informal conversation, and also to understand the social context of the data.

Using interviews allowed me to find out what others felt and think about their worlds, to understand their experiences and to reconstruct the events in which I did not participate. Interviews also allow flexibility in fieldwork as they can be used at different stages of the research process. Semi-structured interviews are deemed to be suitable as they allow flexibility in the process of interviews themselves. These semi-structured interviews also guide the interviewee to make sure that the researcher obtains as much relevant information as possible.

The interviews took place in the form of a conversation. As proposed by Nieuwenhuis (2007:87), I explored the views, ideas, beliefs, attitudes and experiences of teachers and principals on the roles played by principals in TPD in Gauteng primary schools. Data collected from the principal was found to be the most direct evidence of how principals of selected schools understood their roles and responsibilities with regard to TPD. Participants were invited to relate their experiences, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, ideas and practices in TPD.

### **1.11 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data was analysed in terms of patterns and trends that emerged on TPD in Gauteng. As outlined by Mokhele (2011:95), "data analysis is a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of materials for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes and biases". This analysis review is intended to reveal patterns, themes or biases. According to

Krippendorp (2004:13), “data analysis is potentially one of the most important research techniques in the social sciences”. The content analyst views data as representations not of physical events, but texts, images, and expressions that are created to be seen, read, interpreted, and acted on for their meanings. For Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:96), data analysis is defined as the process of summarising and reporting written data, the main content of data and the messages that they portray.

Furthermore, Krippendorp (2004:14) defines data analysis as a “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use”. He elaborated that texts are any written communicative materials intended to be read, interpreted and understood by people. Data analysis can be undertaken with any written material, from documents to interview transcripts, from media products to personal interviews, reports, public statements, and news releases. Such documents suggest the official perspective on the topic, issue or process.

### **1.12 ANALYSIS PLAN**

Qualitative data analysis used in this study involved breaking data down into constituent parts and themes and checking my field notes. I also listened to the audio-recordings, transcribed by the excerpts, organised and summarised them. Data collected was consolidated into three broad categories of knowledge, experiences and attitudes of the participants towards professional development.

### **1.13 CHAPTER DIVISION**

The study is divided into five chapters as follows.

Chapter 1 introduces the study, and provides the background to the study, the purpose of the study, the problem statement, the research question, aims and objectives of the study and research methodology.

Chapter 2 reviews literature on aspects such as the significance of professional development for teachers, the role of school principals in professional development, time allocation for professional development, models of professional development and a theoretical framework.

Chapter 3 discusses the research paradigms and methodologies, the rationale for the choice of research methodology and research design.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study using qualitative analysis techniques for the data generated from interviews and observations.

Chapter 5 draws conclusions from the literature reviewed and the research findings, proposes recommendations for improvement of policy and practice and suggests areas for further research.

#### **1.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter introduced the study, highlighted background to the study, stated the research problem, aims and objectives of the study, discussed methodology and design and outlined chapter division. Since 1994, there has been a raft of educational reforms, which have resulted in changes in teaching and learning in schools. These changes have caused gaps in the pedagogical knowledge and skills of teachers and created a need for professional development. The chapter explained that the study was conducted in selected underperforming primary schools of Gauteng province. In order to improve learner achievement in the province, professional teacher development has a key role to play. As caretakers and managers of curriculum in schools, principals have an important role to play to ensure effective teaching and learning and overall curriculum delivery. The next chapter reviews pertinent literature on the role of principals in TPD.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRINCIPALS' ROLE**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter dealt with the introduction and background to the study, problem statement, research questions, the aims and objectives of the study, and ethical considerations. This chapter examines local and international literature related to the research question. It begins by exploring TPD, the roles of school principals in TPD, their leadership approaches and the transformative models of TPD. The chapter also examines the significance and relevance of TPD to the professional needs of today's teachers with particular reference to the South African context. A theoretical framework underpinning the concept of TPD and other related themes are presented.

#### **2.2 WHAT IS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?**

“Professional development is an ongoing process of reflection and review articulated with development planning that meets corporate, departmental and individual needs, and the learning process of self-development leading to personal growth as well as development of skills and knowledge that facilitate education” (Sangster, Stone & Anderson 2013:619). Professional development is a necessary tool for keeping teachers abreast of the current changes in the curriculum (Hudson, 2013:77). Steyn and Van Niekerk (2005:130) agree that professional development helps teachers to acquire up-to-date knowledge of the subjects they teach and to use techniques that are powerful in enhancing student learning. Teachers are required to upgrade their skills and sharpen their minds through professional development. This professional development is a key mechanism for teachers that can be used to improve classroom instruction and student achievement (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss & Shapley, 2007:10).

Steyn (2009:116) contends that the development of teachers must meet the individual's needs in terms of content knowledge and subject specification and the inner drive of an individual teacher towards his or her own professional development. Teachers need feedback so that they can know their level of progression since feedback empowers people to make improvements. Teachers' individual beliefs have a significant impact on the development

process and a detailed plan for introducing new content and practices, and facilitation of a follow-up action is required. It is suggested that strong links between theory and practice should be forged by teachers in their classes. Sangster et al. (2013:125) argue that traditional models of TPD support theory over practice, decontextualised research over contextualised action research, and the advanced knowledge of teachers over school-based applied knowledge. A shift to a collaborative design and delivery was suggested and proposed by Sangster et al. (2013:134) as an alternative model of TPD that has the following five guidelines.

- TPD models should be designed to have an impact on teachers to ensure relevant changes in educational practices.
- Teachers should be viewed not only as implementers of reform, but also as investigators and problem solvers.
- There should be a re-examination of the traditionally privileged position of the university in relation to schools, and of the symmetries in relations between academics and teachers.
- Models of TPD that go beyond training to allow teachers to act as well-informed critics of reform are required.
- TPD must be designed in ways that deepen discussion, promote discourse communities and support innovation (Sangster et al. 2013:134).

In order for TPD to be effective, Steyn (2009:117) suggests that teachers should draft their own development programmes. They should take charge of their self-development, as they know their areas of need where they should grow professionally. In general, an effective principal plays an important role in the growth of teachers in school. The school principal needs to be a partner in the whole process of TPD by taking the lead and giving guidance where necessary. Principals change the “norms, values, beliefs and assumptions of teachers” (Lam, Yim & Lam 2002:84). It is imperative that the principals should be consistent with the values they advocate and should become appropriate role models for teachers. In the process of development, principals should provide individualised support and demonstrate respect for teachers and concern for their feelings and professional needs.

Zachariou, Kadji-Beltran and Manoli (2013:714) corroborate that principals are the key drivers of TPD in schools. They are in a better position to shape the organisational conditions necessary for successful and sustained implementation, to create the school vision, set high expectations and clear purposes, and to drive teaching and learning. In their managerial positions, principals should take a leading role since their main responsibility involves taking decisions that concern the school and the community (Zachariou et al., 2013:714). Their responsibility involves organising school, teaching and learning according to a new commonly agreed school policy, ensuring the interconnections and consistency of the sustainability messages that reach the children within all the aspects of the school, organising the school through transparent processes, and evaluating both the individual's progress as well as the school's progress.

### **2.2.1 EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

TPD is the vital structural element that focuses on developing and equipping individual teachers in their areas of specialisation. Its main thrust is to identify teachers' needs that lead to the development of remedial programmes relevant to each individual teacher. Coe, Aloisi, Higgins and Major (2014:41) state that effectiveness of TPD is underpinned by the following points:

- A thorough study of the school situation and the proper identification of development need.
- Active involvement of teachers in the staff development.
- The spirit in which the principal and the teachers work together as professional associates bound together by common purpose that should prevail during staff development sessions.
- The emphasis should be on direct improvement of teaching and learning in the classroom.

Vincent and Ross (2001:42) posit that the learning styles of individual teachers need to be taken into consideration. Just like any group of people, teachers are different and need to be addressed differently. There are many factors that can hinder the process of TPD. It is, therefore, imperative to personalise the training sessions according to different learning styles of the individuals. Chigona and Davids (2014:4) contend that teachers who learn in



programmes that accommodate their preferences acquire more skills because they become more motivated and apply what they learn in the classroom.

However, there are factors that can be a barrier to the progress of teacher development. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2005:134) identified the barriers as:

- Environmental factors: A well-equipped venue with suitable furniture and good atmosphere.
- Emotional factors: “Since adults prefer to be involved in their own learning for the sake of personal ownership, they should participate in setting goals, priorities, processes and the evaluation of professional development”.
- Sociological factors: Although lecturing has long been an acceptable mode of instruction, it should include other techniques. Chigona et. al (2014:6) assert that effective professional development implies maximising staff interaction through small group discussions that could stimulate their learning and provide motivation.
- Psychological factors: When planning for TPD, “different physiological needs of teachers should be considered, such as the time of the day, type of food and beverage preferences”. Learning styles are also related to physiological factors: auditory (hearing), visual (seeing) and tactual (touching) sense impressions (Vincent & Ross, 2001:41).

## **2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This section explores the theory selected to undergird this study, namely constructivism.

### **2.3.1 Constructivism**

Chigona, Chigona and Davids (2014:34) describes constructivism as a learning theory that claims that, “knowledge is not passively received, but is actively built up by the cognising subject”, and “that the function of cognition is adaptive and serves the organisation of the experimental world”. Constructivism is based on the “assumption that humans generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences and ideas. It is basically a theory based on observation and scientific study about how people learn”. Teachers learn in different ways in their practices of development, and principals should assist and develop them in their areas of need. Constructivism is a theory that deals with an individual. It is based on the view that people make their own understanding and knowledge

of the world, through experience and reflecting on those experiences (Morake, 2014:66). This means that teachers should not be regarded as empty vessels that need to be filled with information.

Constructivist classes reveal a shift in thinking regarding the underlying assumptions about what knowledge is, and how people learn. This theory enables teachers to make the shift in their teaching during the lessons in classrooms. Constructivism does not dismiss the existing knowledge that teachers have already acquired. Rather, it acknowledges the fact that teachers are not empty entities. This theory has been to be relevant for this study because it advocates modification of the existing knowledge and assists teachers to construct knowledge rather than reproduce a series of facts. It conveys the idea of gaining knowledge in a collaborative manner. In terms of this theory, teachers become transformed, partly because in their developmental sessions and workshops, they become active participants rather than passive recipients throughout the learning process. Teachers become engaged in content delivery and unpack it to suit their classroom situation and environments. Constructivism triggers teachers' creativity skills and abilities.

It encourages teachers to collaborate and come up with different strategies on how to implement and deliver curriculum coverage according to their learners' cognitive levels.

### **2.3.2 Social Constructivist**

According to Amineh and Asl (2015:49), social constructivism suggests that knowledge is first constructed in a social context and is then appropriated by individuals. Social constructivists believe that the process of sharing individual perspectives called "collaborative elaboration" results in learners constructing an understanding together, which would not be possible on their own. In recent years, constructivist theorists have extended the "traditional focus on individual learning to address collaborative and social dimensions of learning". Amineh et.al (ibid.) view learning as "an active process where learners should learn to discover principles, concepts and facts for themselves"; hence, the importance of encouraging guesswork and intuitive thinking in learners. For the social constructivist, "reality is not something that we can discover because it does not pre-exist prior to our social invention of it".

In general, constructivist scholars agree that "individuals make meanings through the interactions with each other and with the environment they live in". Amineh et al. (2015:49)

further indicate that each teacher should contribute and share with peers, his or her views and approaches used in a classroom situation. In essence, teachers should connect with each other and share good practices about teaching and learning among themselves.

### **2.3.3 Connectivism**

Connectivism is a new learning theory developed in 2004 by George Siemens, which states that teaching and learning is a network phenomenon, influenced by socialisation (Siemens, 2004:4). He further contends that “teaching and learning is no longer an internal, individualistic activity”, but a societal mandate that changes the environment. Duke, Harper and Johnston (2013:04) agree that connectivism is social learning that is networked and characterised as a reflection of societies that are changing rapidly. Teaching and learning takes place, then knowledge continues to grow and evolve to enhance what the learner currently possesses (Siemens, 2004:05).

Trnova (2014:34) posits that connectivism attempts to close the gap between the education of teachers and teaching in schools as teachers continually need to be equipped with new competencies and innovative professional skills. Teachers are not satisfied only with new methods and techniques, but they need to understand teaching through digital and social reasoning of these innovative educational methods and instruments.

Teachers learn through digital media such as cell phones, internet, using social media such as Skype or Facebook, and socialising with their peers. Teachers mostly share their views about the implementation of new curriculum strategies. According to Trna and Trnova (2010:34), connectivity strengthens TPD. It enhances continuous teamwork among teachers, “networking by creation of information and cooperative ties among members of a team”. From this background, I view connectivism as collaborative thinking and networking that emphasises dialogue. Connectivism allows diverse thinking, openness and encourages pedagogical conversation. Two or more teachers can debate and share teaching strategies through cyber space, which may lead to enhanced efficiency and improve learner achievement. Principals as caretakers and managers of curriculum delivery should encourage teachers to embrace connectivism and its strategies.

### **2.3.4 Situational Leadership Theory**

In terms of situational leadership theory, there is no single best style of leadership that can be used in all situations or circumstances. The best action of the leader depends on a range of situational contextual factors. Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall (2009:27) emphasise that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to TPD. Rather, the choice of the approach to be used depends on the situation and level of individuals that are in need of development.

One of the fundamentals of situational leadership theory is that principals have to consider the readiness levels of teachers in need of development by analysing their ability and willingness. Effective leadership is task-relevant, and the “most successful leaders are those that adapt their leadership style to the maturity of the individuals they are attempting to lead or influence” (Kyahurwa, 2013:18). In their sessions of TPD, principals should apply this theory, as the needs of teachers and their years of experience are different. In order for principals to achieve a certain goal, they should be able to adapt or adjust each teacher’s style to their circumstances or individual situations (Kyahurwa, 2013:18).

### **2.4 THE SUPPORT AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPALS IN TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

TPD is an important change process in skilling teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom (Dimmock, 2012:185). Principals should promote, sustain and empower teachers to achieve curricular goals. According to Fullan (2001:78), principals are gatekeepers whose responsibility is to develop a positive atmosphere of professionalism. They are the drivers of effective professional development of their staff.

In the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), the DoE (1999:10) pronounced that principals are responsible for the development of staff training programmes that are “school-based, school-focused and externally directed to assist teachers, particularly the new and inexperienced ones, in developing and achieving educational objectives in accordance with the needs of the school”. As a member of the School Management Team (SMT), the principal has a responsibility to ensure that the school functions effectively and takes a lead in the implementation processes of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) (DoE, 2003:12-14). The following are some of the roles and responsibilities that are assigned to the principal:

- The principal must ensure that the workshops are arranged according to the needs of his or her staff members.
- The principal, together with the staff development team (SDT) are responsible for advocacy and training of relevant staff members at school.
- Principals should take the initiative in working together with teachers and determine their strengths and weaknesses.
- Principals are supposed to involve teachers in designing and implementing development programmes. The involvement must have the training needs and approaches to satisfy the teachers' needs and include follow-up activities.
- Principals should provide opportunities for staff to discuss case studies and good teaching practice.

Staff members prefer their peers to present staff development programmes. The implication is that principals should act as facilitators and not controllers of TPD activities. Staff meetings, professional development programmes, memoranda to staff members and one-on-one interviews are excellent opportunities for principals to encourage staff to discuss current research on effective teaching.

SACE adds that teachers are solely responsible for their ongoing professional development based on their identified areas of need (SACE, 2013:4). Training activities are those chosen by teachers themselves for their own development and the improvement of their own professional practices, which should also be the priority of the principal. The priority activities of teachers, therefore, are undertaken by the principal through Whole School Development (WSD) cognisant of institutional conditions for the improvement of teaching and learning. It is also a priority to be taken by the principal to create an environment that is conducive to professional development initiatives.

Moyle (2016:20) articulates that professional development practices include individual study; designing and executing school improvement projects; organising or attending cluster workshops; attending training courses; mentoring and coaching; leading or participating in peer support group through teacher support networks; participating and contributing to professional association conferences; obtaining additional formal professional or subject qualifications among other interventions. Principals as leaders of respective schools should

consult literature to understand how they can lead their staff members to enhance the provision of quality education. However, Du Plessis, Conley and Du Plessis (2007:105) found lack of time to be a barrier in these educational developments. Since 1994, there have been rapid changes to the curriculum in South Africa, and these have caused the need for more time on the stakeholders, particularly teachers. Du Plessis et al. (ibid.) further contend that teachers fail to use the provision of eighty hours per year for professional development purposes as stipulated in the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) Resolution. The common reasons for this given by teachers include work overload because of crowded classes and the rush to complete the syllabus.

#### **2.4.1 Principal as an Instructional Leader**

Instructional leadership captures the heart of the school manager (Wood & Seobi, 2016:10). The importance of the principal's role at school has been highlighted by Botha (2004:140), who maintains that the principal's primary task is to focus efforts on what the school wants to achieve, what it wants to be, and what it wants to do for the students academically. In this way, the quality of results at school reflects the kind, character and quality of leadership that the principal possesses. Thus, the principal becomes the crucial player towards effective and efficient curriculum delivery at school.

Botha (2004:140) characterises a school principal who is an instructional leader as a visionary, who leads effective teaching and curricular strategies and supports teachers in their efforts to do their jobs. The principal gives guidance to teachers and learners by formulating policies and procedures that promote teaching and learning at school. Therefore, instructional leaders become the most important core drivers and promoters of quality teaching and learning at schools. Instructional leadership focuses on developing and improving teaching quality and student learning outcomes, assembling good teachers in specialist areas, developing a strong curriculum in the chosen field and promoting professional development of teachers (Dimmock, 2012:168).

Leithwood (2005:2) emphasises that principals in schools need to understand that leadership is a function more than a role. Principals as instructional leaders provide direction, exercise influence, mobilise and work together with all relevant stakeholders at school. In this kind of leadership, they do not impose the goals of the school on teachers in terms of curriculum

implementation. Rather, they should work with teachers in creating a shared sense of purpose in both student achievement and teacher development. In this instance, principals become instructional coaches. Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance [MGSLG] (2014:2) defines an instructional coach as someone whose chief professional responsibility is to bring evidence-based practices into the classroom by working with teachers. The principal as an instructional coach should possess pedagogical knowledge, practical knowledge, disciplinary knowledge and situational knowledge (Gordon, 2013:152).

Developing and coaching teachers in schools is viewed as one of the key functions of an instructional leader (Leithwood, 2005:4). Leithwood further emphasises that effective educational leaders need to influence the development of human resources in their schools, as follows:

- “Effective leaders encourage reflection and challenge their staff to examine assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed. They provide information and resources to help people see discrepancies between current and desired practices”. They enable teachers and others to understand and gain mastery over the complexities of necessary curriculum changes.
- Most educational improvement requires significant levels of change for the individuals involved. Successful educational leaders show respect for staff and concern about their feelings and needs. Leaders provide incentives and structures to promote change, as well as opportunities for individual learning and appropriate means for monitoring progress towards improvement. For example, these could include inculcating a positive attitude towards the use of digital tools in class for digital literacy.
- Effective school leaders set examples for staff and others to follow the school’s values and goals consistently. By modelling desired dispositions and actions, leaders enhance others’ beliefs about their enthusiasm for change.
- Leaders need to understand the content and pedagogy required for learning in relation to student outcomes, and how to provide feedback that leads to teacher and curriculum development. Hughes and Pickeral (2013:5) caution that this model may be beyond the scope of the principal, and therefore, requires shared leadership.

- Hughes and Pickeral (2013:8) submit that this model is linked to leadership content knowledge. It requires a strong knowledge base integrated with the ability to resolve challenges using relevant and appropriate strategies.
- Relational trust is built by interpersonal respect, personal regard for others, role competence and personal integrity.

Principals as instructional leaders should promote effective learning in classroom, out of classroom, learning of values and ethics, responsibilities, learning to sustain culture and develop national character (Sharma, 2012:19). Principals in schools are the most critical role player in the success of a school's improvement initiatives and its overall effectiveness. The primary responsibility of the principal as an instructional leader is to promote teaching and learning and professional growth (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004:5). These goals can be accomplished by focusing on teaching and learning, encouraging collaboration, using data to improve learning, providing support, and aligning curriculum, assessment and instruction.

According to Ali, Wahi and Yamat (2018:10), principals need to provide TPD opportunities, which address emergent needs of teachers. Teachers need new strategies and learning techniques that are relevant to current curriculum changes. The developments as stated by Blasé and Blasé (1999:136) must support the major instructional goals that teachers pursue. The opportunities should be in line with the teachers' needs and support innovation. These decisions result in increased teacher innovation and creativity, risk taking, instructional focus, as well as the effects on motivation and self-esteem. Poirier (2009:21) posits that principals are expected to produce a positive impact from their instructional leadership; they must perform and emphasise the instructional supervisory role, which includes an understanding and commitment to the following elements:

- Training for teachers in supervision, mentoring and coaching;
- Sensitivity to the processes of professional growth and continuous improvement;
- Training in observation and reflection on practice in teacher preparation programmes;
- Integration of supervision with staff development, curriculum development and school improvement plan;
- Improved professional practice both inside and outside the classroom;
- Continuous improvement as part of every teacher's daily life;



- Collegiality among teachers and students;
- Use of terms such as colleague, consultation and coaching to describe collaboration among professionals; and
- Linking and connecting teachers to digital online sources of information for sharing, curating and knowledge construction.

According to Mestry (2017:3), as instructional leaders, principals must assist teachers to maintain a focus on why the school exists. One of the dimensions required to achieve this goal is to encourage and support collaboration among teachers themselves rather than maintaining teacher isolation. It is the prerogative of principals as instructional leaders in schools to cultivate an environment in which new information and practices are eagerly incorporated into the system. In this dimension, teachers model teamwork and discuss current affairs in terms of curriculum and new programmes in the curriculum, as well as the implementation of changes if change is necessary.

Mestry (2017:3) further posits that school principals' collaborative practices establish the idea that teachers are the knowledge sources, for example, in the selection of a language of communication at school. As Datnow (2011:148) observes, decades of research have revealed that collaboration is essential for school improvement. Teachers often talk about the challenges they encounter in classes, and they observe, critique and plan together. Teachers learn faster and better in this collaborative culture though they may differ in their learning styles. Principals as instructional leaders view collaboration as the best strategy to bring teamwork among the staff members and reduce teachers' isolation by creating time for joint planning; for example, planning learners' activities and assessment task.

#### **2.4.2 Principal as a Transformational Leader**

According to Hallinger (2003:331), transformational leadership is a bottom-up approach to leadership that focuses on developing the organisation's capacity to innovate and develop teachers. The emerging climate that characterises transformational leadership of principals quantifies the development of individual teachers. In this approach, principals manage to win the trust of teachers and evaluate their willingness to change. It becomes easy for the principal to develop teachers that are willing to change and acquire skills that enhance teaching and learning.

Hallinger (2003:331) further states that a transformational leader does not act like a single individual; rather, he or she acts like a collaborative leader, coordinating and controlling from above, focusing on stimulating change through bottom-up participation. In this process, Jackson (2000:31) suggests that a principal as a transformational leader requires a high degree of tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty, and an ability to live with the messy process of change as a process of development takes longer for some teachers. "Rather than focusing specifically on direct coordination, control, and supervision of curriculum and instruction, transformational leadership seeks to build the organisation's capacity to select its purposes, and to support the developmental changes to practices of teaching and learning" (Jackson, 2000:31). This leadership occurs when principals "broaden and elevate their subordinates' interests, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the group's purpose and mission, and when they stir their followers to look beyond their own interests to the good of others" (Bica & Firica, 2010:4). The transformational leader fosters teacher development and helps teachers solve problems more effectively as they genuinely believe that teachers as a group could develop better solutions than the principal could alone (Naidoo & Botha, 2012:292).

Transformational leadership has a distributive nature whose mission is to empower teachers across all needs of their development. Hallinger (2003:331) as cited by Leithwood (2005) outlines seven components of transformational model as "individualised support, shared goals, vision, intellectual stimulation, culture building, rewards, and high expectations and modelling". In order for these components to be effective, principals as transformational leaders need to work with others in the school community to identify goals and then link these to the broader organisational goals. According to Kyahurwa (2013:31), a transformational leader should focus on these three essential effective goals:

- Assisting their staff to develop and uphold a collaborative, professional school culture;
- "Engaging staff in collaborative goal setting, reducing teacher isolation, using bureaucratic mechanisms to support cultural changes, sharing leadership with others by delegating power, and actively communicating the school's norms and beliefs".
- Promoting teacher development. Teachers' motivation for development is enhanced when they internalise goals for professional growth. "This process is facilitated when they are strongly committed to a school mission. When leaders give staff an activity that is new

to them, or not a routine school improvement problem, they should make sure goals are clear, motivating and realistic”.

Leaders also help teachers to solve problems more effectively. Transformational leadership is valued by some because it inspires teachers to engage in new activities; hence, they put extra effort in what they do. Transformational leaders use such practices mainly to help staff members work smarter, not harder. These leaders believe that solutions that come from a group are better than those of an individual.

Principals are believed to have an ability to increase commitment of staff that sees the relationship between what they are trying to accomplish and the mission of the school. These leaders really believe in intrinsic motivation. They motivate, inspire and unite teachers on common goals as well as emphasise vision as the central dimension of leadership (Bush, 2011:201). They base their performance on personal values as they act as coaches and mentors who are trusted, admired and respected by their followers (Fillery-Travis & Tyrrell, 2012:6). Teachers are persuaded to join the vision and share the ideals of the organisation.

The principal engages with staff and other stakeholders to produce higher levels of commitment in order to achieve its vision. Principals create the conditions in which others are committed and self-motivated to work towards the improvement of the school. Some principals create a good rapport through open door policies, and this allows teachers to consult the principal gladly when the need arises without following protocol.

#### **2.4.3 Principal in Distributed Leadership**

Distributed leadership is viewed as a “social distribution of a leadership function, which stretches over the work of numerous individuals” (Leithwood et al., 2006:47). In this sense, the South African Schools Act, No. 96 of 1996 emphasises more participation and collaboration in school leadership (Van der Mescht, 2008:14). Principals in distributed leadership work together with teachers to attain the same goals in schools. Bennett (2003:7) describes distributed leadership as an “emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals”. Nowadays technology has taken over globally; currently, in our district, principals can formulate staff group chats in social networks where discussions about the challenges teachers encounter during their curriculum delivery can be outlined. It allows people to work together to pool their initiative and expertise, resulting in an outcome that is

greater than the sum of individual actions. This kind of practice plays a huge role in the success of school level improvement strategies, as it requires the cooperation and involvement of all members in school. In this instance, the principal is more concerned with inter-dependency rather than dependency. As staff members carry out their mandate in the learning process, they also regain confidence in their different learning areas. This is essential to achieving the best results (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004:20).

The distributed leadership style is distinguished by its open communication channels and mutual agreement in decision-making. Principals and teachers share processes that enhance curriculum, values and ideas. Those values can be infused into the teaching of Life Skills, as it integrates other subjects in primary schools. However, the role of principals is not reduced in the process.

They maximise the potential that they have through sharing the implementation and ownership with their staff members. According to Kyahurwa (2013:22), democratic school principals provide opportunities for teachers to develop and have a high sense of personal growth and job satisfaction. This allows their staff members to grow and be actively involved in the process of learning.

Bush (2011:88) and Harris (2004:13) concur that distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organisation rather than seeking this only through a formal position or role. The concepts of sharing good practices are advocated in this leadership style. Principals who embrace distributed leadership create the conditions for teacher empowerment.

In a school, some roles are formally recognised, like the subject coordinators, grade heads and HODs, while others may have no official title, but play an equally important role within the school (Harris, 2004:10). For example, master teachers who are equivalent to HODs provide guidance to novice teachers.

## **2.5 TRANSFORMATIVE MODELS AS FUTURE PLANS FOR PRINCIPALS REGARDING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.5.1 Mentoring**

According to Hudson (2013:772), mentoring is an important process of professional development underpinned by many different factors which include mentor-mentee personal and professional qualities, the mentor's attributes and practices, the environment or context within which it operates, and the selection and pairing of the personnel involved in the relationship. Its aim is to uplift the practices of teachers in their classrooms and improve the performance of students (Hudson, 2013:772). The purpose of mentoring should be guided by empirical evidence and the literature relevant to the needs of each mentee. Mentorship is seen as a model that enhances communication skills, develops leadership roles and advances pedagogical knowledge.

Ulvik and Sunde (2013:754) view mentoring as a key strategy in supporting, guiding, advising, educating and nurturing professional growth, and coaching both veteran and new teachers. Mentoring should be a priority for principals at schools, as it is a strategy of investing in teachers to become well-informed on educational reforms. Mentoring as a model of professional development helps teachers to build capacity in two ways: "quality mentoring of pre-service teachers through explicit mentoring practices and reflecting and deconstructing teaching practices for mentors' own pedagogical advancement" (Hudson, 2013:771).

Mentoring is a way of professional growth that empowers prospective teachers to think about expanded ways of engaging in curricula and pedagogy. It is developmental; it is learned by identifying and understanding the needs of the teacher. According to Pharabatho (2013:51), mentoring is a process through which pedagogical knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities may be passed on to less-experienced practitioners. In this process, a more experienced member of the organisation takes responsibility for and actively participates in the systematic development of the skills and leadership abilities of a less-experienced member of the organisation. It is all about giving people a broader outlook. Mentoring is not about being sponsored for a promotion; rather it is one of the vehicles that aid development of employees (MGSLG, 2014:10).

In the mentorship programme, the mentor should move alongside the mentee, working side by side, and give hands-on instruction where necessary. The mentor has to do the task together with the mentee, leading by example. The mentor suggests activities that are content-based in the classroom while the mentee observes. As the mentor provides specific advice, support and guidance to the mentee, he or she has to be cognisant of the following roles:

- Providing guidance on career planning and professional development;
- Providing advice on training opportunities and suitable training programmes;
- Providing guidance on performance and quality of work;
- Giving support and achieving aspirations;
- Providing guidance and networking;
- Being a professional and personal developer;
- Providing emotional support;
- Acting as an advocate, advisor and a role model; and
- Being an information source, and capacity builder.

### **2.5.2 Coaching**

According to Rhodes and Beneicke (2002:301), coaching is the process that enables learning and development to occur and it improves academic performance. Coaching maximises the potential of individuals at schools and assists them to learn.

Coaching models are complex activities deeply associated with the support of individual learning. Rhodes and Beneicke (2006:301) observe that there is little or no distinction between the functions of these models – coaching, mentoring, and peer-networking relationship, for they are talking to each other. MGSLG (2014:16) outline the following similarities between mentoring and coaching:

- Both of them require well-developed interpersonal skills;
- Both require the “ability to generate trust, to support commitment and to generate new actions through the use of listening and speaking skills”;
- Both shorten the “learning curve”;
- Both aim for the individual “improve his or her performance and be more productive”;

- Both encourage the individual to stretch, but can “provide support if the person falters or gets out of his or her depth”;
- Both provide “support without removing responsibility”;
- Both require a “degree of organisational knowledge”;
- Both focus on “learning and development to enhance skills and competencies”;
- Both “stimulate personal growth” to develop new expertise; and
- Both can function as a career guide to review career goals and identify values, vision and career strengths.

The coaching model covers a variety of professional development practices that are based on a range of philosophical and empirical premises (Hargreaves, 2011:18). Coaching as a function of mentoring also embraces broader counselling, support and guidance to both new teachers and veterans.

Kennedy (2005:242) observes that both coaching and mentoring share the characteristic of a one-to-one relationship, generally between two teachers, which is designed to support the mentee or coachee, although most attempts to distinguish between the two suggest that coaching is more skills-based and mentoring involves an element of counselling and professional friendship. He further asserts that the catch words used in coaching models are ‘inspire’ and ‘motivate’, while those used in mentoring are ‘instruct’ and ‘guide’. This differs from formal training in that it tends to be more on one-on-one and on-the-job basis, and it is not a quick fix or a once-off exercise, but rather a process that lasts days, weeks or months at times.

#### 2.5.2.1 Coaching in America

Rhodes and Beneicke (2002:297) view professional development as a key element in creating more effective schools and raising the standard of pupil achievement in America. They assert that positive staff members, who are well-developed, advocate the use of coaching/mentoring to enhance TPD and performance in schools. Shidler (2009:2) contends that “in educational reforms such as No Child Left Behind, coaching has been an essential component” both for increased teacher self-efficacy and instructional efficacy. Knight (2009:18) concurs with Hudson (2013:772) and identifies three types of coaching that are

particularly common in American schools: literacy coaching, cognitive coaching and instructional coaching.

- Cognitive coaching engages in dialogical conversations with teachers and others, observes them while working and then uses powerful questions, rapport-building, and communication skills to empower those they coach to reflect deeply on their practices.
  - Literacy coaching is used widely to refer to teachers that use a variety of tools and approaches to improve teachers' practices and student learning related to literacy.
  - Instructional coaching partners with teachers to help them "incorporate research-based instructional practices into their teaching" so that students can learn more effectively.
- There are commonalities in these approaches to coaching.

Knight (2009:19) states that all these approaches to coaching focus on professional practice with the purpose of improving the ability of a school to educate students by improving the way teachers teach in the classroom.

#### 2.5.2.2 Coaching in context

The professional learning experiences facilitated by coaches are usually directly applicable in teachers' classrooms. Teachers who collaborate with coaches make plans, explore content, reflect and implement new practices that they will use immediately in their lessons. As Knight (2009:19) argues, coaching is not a one-shot workshop, but rather differentiated professional support, meeting each teacher's unique needs over time. In coaching, there is no 'boss': teachers have a choice and control over how coaching proceeds. Excellent coaches strive to enable dialogue in their coaching sessions. There is no telling method in coaching, rather engaging a teacher in a reflective conversation where a coach and a teacher reason together. Coaches are non-evaluative in their sessions with teachers (Waddell & Dunn, 2005:84). They neither assess nor evaluate teachers, but observe them, and in the same manner, teachers may observe coaches teaching. Coaches do not use any yardstick that can be intimidating to the coachee. They discuss teaching openly with teachers in a non-judgemental way. The conversation between the coach and a teacher must be confidential.

Coaching becomes more successful when teachers are comfortable speaking openly about their strengths and concerns. Coaching is viewed as a model that is more about exploring and



developing the individual's own values, vision, standards and inventing a future from the individual's own possibilities.

Principals need to “support their coaches by attending coaching workshops, observing coaches while they conduct model lessons, speaking frequently about the importance of professional learning and coaching, learning what the coach shares with teachers, and meeting frequently with coaches to ensure that their coaches share their vision for professional development” (Knight, 2009:19). Principals and coaches should ensure that coaches work as peers providing support and service to their colleagues and principals, and other administrators should perform important administrative tasks such as teacher evaluations and walk-throughs. Coaches should support principals in the execution of their duties.

No matter how much a coach knows, and how effective he or she is, the principal's voice is ultimately the most important to teachers (Knight & Coenett, 2008:52). Communication is found to be a fundamental aspect of the coaching/peer relationship. These models involve two-way relationships where a coach or a mentor communicates interest, curiosity, enthusiasm and support, and the coachee communicates his/her values, needs, aspirations, problems and solutions (MGSLG, 2014:21). Coaching should be facilitated through respectful communication. Coaches need to be excellent communicators who articulate their messages clearly, listen respectfully, and ask thought-provoking, open-ended questions, and professionals whose observations are energising, encouraging, practical and honest (Knight, 2009:18).

### **2.5.3 Cascade Approach**

The cascade approach, according to D'Ortenzio (2012:63), involves the dissemination of information, the central message and approaches. The cascade model encompasses a “series of consecutive training processes, each occurring as a result of the previous training”. The purpose of this approach is to “impart an agreed and consistent body of knowledge, skills and attitudes”. The successful implementation of the model requires that the audiences be well-defined and their particular needs carefully targeted (D'Ortenzio, 2012:63). The objectives of the training must be clearly defined and relevant to the recipients.

#### **2.5.4 Training Workshops**

A training workshop approach is successfully utilised by the majority of teachers as one of the best models in TPD (Hişmanoğlu & Hişmanoğlu, 2010:16). Workshops have been the mainstay model used by all provincial education departments in South Africa. Identified challenges encountered by teachers during teaching and learning are addressed by means of workshops. However, Phorabatho (2013:47) contends that even though this approach is popular and considered to be the best in TPD, it has been criticised with its brief, once-off nature that often assumes what the needs of teachers are and provides no follow-up thereafter. Some trainers are primarily not concerned about achieving the improvement of teachers' skills and the development of their conceptions of teaching and learning that result changes in students' learning. Rather, they use a bureaucratic method of TPD (Phorabatho, 2013:48).

Trainers who are mostly district officials are often articulate about what they are trying to achieve, and sophisticated in their training methods, but there is little attempt to find out whether they are successful (Gibbs & Coffey 2004:88). The development becomes one-size-fits-all without looking at specific needs of teachers. Chisholm (2000, as cited in Phorabatho, 2013:49) criticised these district officials for their virtual lack of ongoing support and development opportunities, especially when teachers return to schools after receiving development workshops. Steyn (2011:49) argues that most of these training workshops are seen as ineffective as they are not feasible in practice. As such, there is little or only partial passive participation of teachers during the workshops.

#### **2.5.5 Motivation as a Model**

Motivation, according to Van Deventer and Kruger (2005:148), involves influencing subordinates to achieve the aim that the manager wants them to achieve. Some scholars identify motivating teachers as another essential role that shows good leadership in a principal (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994:224; Gray & Starke, 1988:107; Van Niekerk, Stroebel, Van Rooyen, Whitfield & Swanepoel, 2009:101). Motivation is a force that can be viewed as a generator of energy to behaviour, gives direction to behaviour, and underlines the tendency for behaviour to persist, even in the face of difficulties (Bipath, 2008:79).

Motivation process is initiated by a conscious awareness of an unsatisfied need. It has to satisfy the needs of an individual. It is important that school principals should ensure that

teachers who are chosen for a specific job actually do it willingly. Teachers are required to carry out the plans of action that have been drawn up, and the principals must motivate teachers to be proactive (Heystek, 2015:09).

Motivation plays a vital role in effective TPD. Van Deventer and Kruger (2005:153) propose that principals should influence teachers towards TPD with the aim of achieving the outcomes of the school. However, the style of motivation of the principal depends on his style of leadership and may vary from giving rewards to taking disciplinary measures.

A positive style of leadership is usually characterised by the use of positive motivation such as merit awards, promotions, commendation, recognition and delegation of greater responsibility and authority. Factors that keep good teachers include a sense of appreciation and support for their work. Parag (2014:38) concurs that the principals who aim to motivate and encourage teachers in their schools should adopt these effective guidelines for motivation:

- Set challenging outcomes to motivate, especially those staff members who have a need for success;
- Recognise individual differences among the staff;
- Make sure that staff members perceive the aims that are set as attainable;
- Ensure the staff's motivation by including them in the decision-making process;
- Make teachers feel useful and important by delegating tasks meaningfully, and allowing them to take part in the management process;
- Use effective communication to keep staff informed about the aims set, and results achieved;
- Be prepared to delegate tasks and authority to competent people;
- Acknowledge staff personally if they deserve it;
- Ensure healthy competition among staff as this motivates people to greater success;
- Try to get to know each member of staff personally, attend to their needs, and listen to them in order to identify their motives; and
- Put personal development first.

## **2.6 TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (DoE, 1998:6) allocates 80 hours for TPD. According to this act, teachers need to use these hours outside the normal teaching time, which implies that principals may organise TPD programmes outside the formal school day. These programmes can be conducted in private venues either on weekends or during school holidays.

This kind of setting does not interrupt teaching and learning in schools. Teachers are expected to give their undivided attention and show dedication to their development (Chisholm, 2000:89). Nonkonyana (2009:70) and Engelbrecht (2008:50) emphasise that teachers are not required to utilise their free time after hours when they are tired of teaching. Heystek (2008:178) concurs that teachers do attend these afternoon sessions where they become passive as the presenter gives them new ideas or train them on new practices. The exercise of their attendance, therefore, becomes futile and does not serve the purpose of developmental processes. Heystek further argues that these developmental practices should be embedded into the daily practices of teachers. Smith (2003:211) agrees that teachers should be given time for development practices within regular working days.

In terms of Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (DoE, 1998:6), teachers are also entitled to leave of not more than three working days per annum to engage in activities aimed at professional development. Accordingly, this obliges principals to allow teachers to attend professional development activities during regular school days. However, principals need to put systems in place that will minimise the disruption of teaching and other school activities. Masoge (2008:175) and Gulston (2010:47) emphasise that parents, school governing bodies, district officials, teacher unions and community groups should be informed by the principal of such activities, if they are likely to disrupt the smooth running of the school. In this context, practical considerations such as learners' transportation, care for learners after school, the opinions of unions and expectations of district officials should be taken into consideration.

## **2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter provided a summary of the major underpinning concepts of this research. It explores the highlights of the literature concerning TPD. A number of factors that affect TPD

such as time allocation, communication and pedagogical content delivered to teachers have been dealt with.

The fundamental challenges that principals encounter has been outlined. Strategies and the developmental models that talk to the needs of individuals seem to be the best strategy for improving the quality of teaching and learning. Research methodology will be discussed in the next chapter focusing on the qualitative approach chosen for this study together with the data-gathering techniques.

## CHAPTER 3:

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to establish the roles that principals play in TPD in Gauteng primary schools. The literature review also explored different relevant strategies and models of TPD such as mentoring, coaching, cascading model, training workshops and motivation.

This chapter discusses the research design and methodologies followed in the collection and analysis of data. The researcher will deal with the qualitative research methodologies, the choice of the participants, the research instrument, data analysis and interpretation, trustworthiness and confirmability of the research and ethical considerations. Table 3.1 below illustrates the research strategy processes employed in this study

Table 3.1: Research design and methodologies

PARADIGMATIC ASSUMPTIONS	
Theoretical perspective paradigm	Positivism and Connectivism
Methodological paradigm	Quantitative
Strategy of inquiry	Case study research design
SELECTION OF CASES	
Purposeful sampling	Purposeful sampling: 5 primary schools selected in GDE at Ekurhuleni South District.

DATA COLLECTION	
Data-collection method	Interviews
DATA ANALYSIS	
Data analysis strategy	Content analysis and inductive data analysis
QUALITY MEASURES	
Measuring strategy	Trustworthiness, triangulation, member-checking and thick description
ETHICAL CONSIDERATION	

### 3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

According to Willis (2007:8) and Neuman (2011:94), a paradigm is a comprehensive belief system, a world view or framework that guides research and practice in a field that philosophically comprises a view of the nature of reality. Their view is that this could be external and internal to the knower, “a related view of the type of knowledge that can be generated and standards for justifying it, and a disciplined approach to generating that knowledge”. In support, Sefotho (2015:5) views a paradigm as a basic belief system that guides the scientific investigation in a study. It is a “set of assumptions, concepts, values and practices used by the community that shares them to view reality, especially in an intellectual discipline”.

Sefotho (2018:30) defines a paradigm as the “identification of the underlying basis that is used to construct a scientific investigation, or a loose collection of logically held together assumptions, concepts, and propositions that orientate thinking and research”. A paradigm establishes certain theories, traditions, approaches, models, frame of reference, a body of research and methodologies, and it could be seen as a model or framework for observation and understanding (Babbie, 2010:33; Babbie, 2011:32; Creswell, 2007:19; Rubin & Babbie 2010:15). A case study is used in this study to generate data that will give answers to the research question. From an epistemological stance, this study seeks to know the role of principals in TPD. In order to acquire both explicit and implicit knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon, an epistemological enquiry is required. Epistemology raises these questions:

- “How reality can be known”;
- The “relationship between the knower and what is known”;
- The “assumption that guides the process of knowing and the achievement of findings; and
- “The possibility of that process being shared and repeated by others in order to assess the quality of the research and the reliability of those findings” (Gialdino, 2009:8).

### **3.2.1 Positivism**

Positivism is one of the major philosophical branches in social sciences inquiry. The positivist paradigm of “exploring social reality is based on the philosophical ideas of August Comte (1798–1857, cited in Schoeman & Mabunda, 2012:240), who emphasised observation and reason as a means of understanding human behaviour”. According to Comte, “true knowledge is based on experience of the senses” and can be obtained through participant observation during lesson presentation. In the process of TPD, teachers implement what they have learned in workshops and through socialisation. Teachers teach while others observe in peer coaching.

### **3.2.2 Interpretivism**

Babbie and Mouton (2008:28) define interpretivism as “a paradigm that seeks to understand people as they continuously interpret, create, give meaning to, define, justify and rationalise” their daily action. In the same vein, Rubin and Babbie (2010:37) agree that the purpose of interpretivism is to understand and interpret everyday happenings, experiences and social structures and values that people attach to certain phenomena. In this sense, the interpretivist believes in social reality, which is subjective as it is based on the perceptions of participants.

Social realities are constructed by the participants in social settings (Garcia, 2015:5). Garcia further articulates that qualitative researchers interact and talk with participants about their perceptions to seek out the variety of perspectives. In essence, this paradigm focuses on examining the complexity of social phenomena to gain understanding about it. In this regard, (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007:19) established the following ontological assumptions:

- Reality is indirectly constructed based on individual interpretation and is subjective;
- People interpret and make their own events; and
- Events are distinctive and cannot be generalised.

In this study, the researcher seeks to understand the role of principals and their understanding in TPD. The researcher seeks to understand subjective realities that are meaningful to participants in the research. Wisker (2008:69) asserts that the social world is constructed and given meaning subjectively by people. He further states that human beings



are subjects that have consciousness, or a mind, while human behaviour is affected by knowledge of social world.

In this study, I was a participant observer in order to gain the sense of subtle nonverbal communication and understand the interactions in their real context (Neuman, 2011:101). Blumberg (2011:18) states that “interests not only channel our thinking, but rather affect how the world is investigated, and how knowledge is constructed”.

### **3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES**

Cooper and Schindler (2003:146) define a research method as a sequential process that involves several tasks that have clearly defined steps. They also view it as a strategy of enquiry, which moves from the underlying assumptions to research design and data collection. Research methodologies are used to acquire knowledge by reliable and valid procedures (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:9). Burns and Bush (2003:24) view a research method as a means of identifying a data-collection mode, questionnaire design, a sample plan and other aspects of the anticipated research.

#### **3.3.1 Qualitative Research and its Relevance to my Study**

Qualitative methodology was chosen for this study because it requires in-depth information from the key participants, that is, teachers and principals. It is characterised by obtaining data from the participants in their natural settings according to the aims and objectives of the study, and studies people in terms of their own definition of the world (Mouton and Morrison, 2009:107). Mouton further contends that the qualitative approach focuses on the process rather than the outcome. He notes that the participant’s perspective is emphasised because the primary aim is in-depth descriptions and understanding of actions and events, and to understand social action in terms of its specific context rather than attempting to generalise to some theoretical population.

Mouton and Morrison (2009:107) maintains that the qualitative approach focuses on the subjective experiences of individuals, and it is sensitive to the contexts in which people interact with each other. In undertaking this research, my epistemological stance is that I am eager to know the role of principals in TPD. Qualitative research explains complex phenomena through verbal descriptions and typically seeks to answer questions about the complex nature

of phenomena, with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participant's point of view (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:133).

### **3.3.2. Qualitative Research as an Advantage to my Study**

According to Lankshear and Knobel (2004:68), one of the major reasons for the development of a qualitative approach is that researchers often try to understand the world from the perspective of other people. In this case, the researcher seeks to understand the perspectives of principals about their role in TPD.

The study sought to gain an understanding of the social world through direct personal experience in the actual setting of the phenomenon under investigation. Sheppard (2004:162) argues that the aim of social research is to capture the character of naturally occurring human behaviour through first-hand contact. For Merriam (1998:6), the key concern of qualitative researchers is to understand a phenomenon of interest from the participants' perspectives, not the researcher's. In general, the advantages of a qualitative approach include the following: it is based on a "relativistic, constructivist ontology that posits that there is no objective reality; rather, there are multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest" (Neuman, 2011:12). The qualitative approach produces more "in-depth, comprehensive information; it uses information and participant observation for an in-depth description of the context of the variables under consideration and the interactions of different variables in the context".

It seeks a wide understanding of the entire situation, and the findings often have greater validity and less artificiality (Krishnaswamy, Sivakumar & Mathirajan 2006:171). It allows for an inductive form of reasoning. (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005:13) leading to the derivation of themes and categories which allow for easier data analysis (Berliner, 2002:52; Gray, 2009:167). This could be linked to the fact that there are no fixed rules that should be followed (Burns & Bush, 2003:18). A case study design, which is discussed below was used in this study.

### **3.4 A CASE STUDY DESIGN**

Kumar (2005:56) defines a case study as an approach that studies a social phenomenon through an analysis of an individual case. Merriam (2001:4), Yin (2009:59) and Stake (1995:3) define a case study as an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon

within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”.

Merriam (2001:4), Yin (2009:59) and Stake (1995:3) further states that the strategy of inquiry is based on a limited number of analyses, which may be only one. For instance, a person, a group, an episode, a process, a community, a society, or any other unit of a social group are referred to as a case. This design involves gaining an in-depth understanding of a situation and its meaning for those involved as well as a description and an analysis of interaction of certain phenomena in a bounded system or multiple enclosed systems within a particular period (Creswell, 2007:73; Merriam, 2009:40). The study seeks “particularity and complexity of a single case, in order to understand its activity within important circumstances”. The decision to employ a case study design was informed by its ability to use probing questions relating to the role of principals in TPD.

### **3.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF CASE STUDY**

The focus of a case study is specific to a phenomenon that the researcher intends to investigate in depth irrespective of the number of sites, participants and documents (Merriam, 2009:43). The goal of a case study is to generate a thick description of a phenomenon under examination by real actors on site. It gives the reader a clear picture of the study (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011:54; Check & Schutt, 2012:190).

A case study illuminates the reader’s comprehension of the phenomenon under study in the research project (Merriam, 2009:43). A case study has both exploratory and interpretive characteristics, which endeavour to investigate a phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:334). A case study has the ability to get close to the subject of interest by means of observations in natural settings, access to subjective factors, thoughts, feelings and desires (Merriam, 2009:29). Information was gathered from teachers in different settings. Finally, a case study was chosen because this study focuses on a single case, that is, primary schools, and a selected number of participants in order to understand the role of principals in TPD.

### **3.6 POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

White (2005:113) describes a population as the collection of individuals with characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. Newby (2010:231) posits that population

constitutes all instances that meet the requirements of the research issue. The study targeted 10 primary schools in Ekurhuleni South District in Gauteng Province. Currently, the district has 146 primary schools including independent schools. These schools are divided into five circuits, from which five primary schools were selected in each circuit. Each circuit has ex-model C schools, township schools and independent schools. Some township schools are situated in informal settlements with high levels of poverty.

In analysing and presenting data, codes were used for the selected schools in order to conceal their identity. As indicated by McMillan and Schumacher (2006:319), the criteria for the selection of the study population were guided by the research problem and its purpose. The selection of schools in the same district in terms of geographical location was intended to make it easier for the researcher to move from one to school to another when collecting data.

### **3.6.1 Population**

When elements of the population are considered for actual inclusion in the study or “a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons that together comprise the subject of a study”, then we call them a sample, (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2003:199). The activity of selecting people from the larger population is called sampling.

Morse and Richards (2007:75) outline principles that can be used to select a setting and choose the most relevant example of the phenomenon. The setting chosen should be interesting and may involve observing as well as interviewing experts on a particular topic. In this study, school principal, one deputy principal, one head of department (HOD) of each phase and 1 teacher in each school in the Ekurhuleni District in Gauteng were interviewed since they are experts in school management who deal directly with teachers. My choice was based on the fact that each school has its own history, culture of learning and teaching, and its own climate.

### **3.6.2 Sample**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:169-176), there are two types of sampling: probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is classified into four groups, namely, simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling and cluster sampling (these types generally being used in quantitative studies), while non-

probability sampling is classified into three groups, namely, convenience sampling, purposive sampling and quota sampling (usually applied in qualitative studies).

According to Hill (2012:79), the feasibility and quality of the study depends solely upon the quality of a sample chosen. He also emphasises that relevancy of the sample to the study is important, and participants should be information-rich or have expertise and ability to provide required information. The size of the sample does not literally guarantee the rich data needed; rather, appropriateness is key and fundamental, meaning that a sample can be huge and still have bias or it can be small, yet rich in data that is needed.

Ritchie and Lewis (2011:107) posit that qualitative research samples are usually small because at some point there are diminishing returns where increasing the sample size no longer contributes anything useful to the study. This means that including an additional number of participants to be interviewed would add no value to the research because the same results would still be obtained.

It should not be the researcher who decides what counts as knowledge, but what the participants view as knowledge, emerging from interactions between participants and the researcher (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:56). The sampling method employed in this study is explained in the next section.

### **3.6.3 Purposive Sampling**

Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the “investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight, and therefore, should select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 2009:38). This sampling can be defined as a sample selected in a deliberative and non-random fashion to achieve a certain goal (Gallow, 2005:1) Purposive sampling is based on the judgement of the researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. It is chosen based on what the researcher considers typical units (Bless & Smith, 2006:92).

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:138) further contend that in purposive sampling, the researcher selects particular elements from the population that would be representative or informative about the topic of interest, based on the researcher’s knowledge of the population. A judgement is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best

information to address the purpose of the research. Data would be needed for the study and sampling decisions “made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to answer the research questions” (Creswell, Ebersohn, Ellof, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Pietersen, Plano Clark, & Van der Westhuizen, 2010:79). In this study, it is assumed that the principals and teachers would be the rich informants for data. Table 3.2 presents information about the circuits from which participants would be chosen in Ekurhuleni South District. Permission would be sought from the relevant authorities at the district offices.

Table 3.2: Selected primary schools at Ekurhuleni

CIRCUIT	SCHOOL	PRINCIPAL	DEP. PRINCIPAL	HOD	TEACHERS	TOTAL
1	School A	1	1	1	1	4
2	School B	1	1	1	1	4
3	School C	1	1	1	2	4
4	School D	1	1	1	2	4
5	School E	1	1	1	2	4
<b>TOTAL</b>						20

### 3.6.3.1 Description of schools

The study was conducted at five primary schools situated in the Ekurhuleni South District. School A is within a radius of 21.5 kilometres from the Ekurhuleni South District offices. It is situated in the south of Katlehong Township where the majority of learners live in poor socio-economic backgrounds, and it is managed by a female principal. The school is found in Circuit 1.

School B is within a radius of 11.3 kilometres from the Ekurhuleni South district offices and is situated in Thokoza Township. It is headed by a male principal. Most learners are underprivileged and this is a no-fee school as determined by the Department of Basic Education based on the economic situation of communities around the school. The school is in Circuit 2.

School C is within a radius of 19.5 kilometres from Ekurhuleni South district offices. The school is situated in Vosloorus Township and surrounded by two hostels. Most learners in the school

are underprivileged. The school is under the leadership of a female principal. This school is in Circuit 3.

School D is within a radius of 9.3 kilometres from Ekurhuleni South district offices. The school is situated in Katlehong North Township in the middle of an informal settlement. The learners who attend to this school are from underprivileged households, and for this reason, it has been designated as no-fee paying school. It is headed by a female principal. The school is in Circuit 4.

School E is within a radius of 16.6 kilometres from Ekurhuleni South district offices. The school is situated at the end of Rondebult suburb and Rondebult RDP houses. The majority of learners at this school come from Rondebult RDP houses. The school is under the leadership of a female principal. The majority of learners at the school are from underprivileged families. The school is in Circuit 5.

### **3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Trustworthiness of the study is about its credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. A study that is credible, transferable, confirmable and dependable can be respected and trusted by a reader because of its value (Hammond & Wellington, 2013:147). These strategies increase trustworthiness of the research. White (2005:205) highlights that trustworthiness is concerned with the quality of research. In order to ensure quality and trustworthiness, the researcher should follow all the relevant procedures before the findings are reached (White, 2005:203). Lincoln and Guba's (1985:329) criteria of truth-value, applicability, consistency and neutrality were adhered to. These concepts are explained below.

- Truth-value: The truth-value comes from the credibility of the study. This study will consider having truth-value based on the interviews with participants, analysing the data using recommended procedures, make accurate recordings of the interviews and finally reaching the findings of the research study based on the data from the interviews.
- Applicability refers to "the degree to which the findings can be applied to other contexts and settings or with other groups" (White, 2005:204). The findings of this study may be

applicable to all relevant stakeholders that seek to understand the role of principals in TPD.

- Consistency: Generally, the same or similar questions were asked all the participants and they were audio-recorded.
- Neutrality: The researcher made every effort to be neutral during the interviews and avoided influencing the discussions in any way.

### **3.7.1 Dependability**

Dependability is achieved when the findings are consistent and can be replicated with similar participants and context. By means of triangulation and participant validation focusing on the exposition of methods of data collection and analysis, as well as exploring alternative explanations for the data collected, the methodology of the study is rendered more dependable to the participants and subsequent users of the data. I used transparent procedures, communicated openly with the participants and organise data in a coherent format that other researchers could follow.

Dense description of the research methods was provided (White, 2005:206) and data triangulation, i.e., use of multiple data sources added to the dependability (White, 2005:89). The researcher should report everything in detail to make it easier for a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results (Shenton, 2004:71).

### **3.7.2 Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings are free from bias. Shenton (2004:72) posits that certain strategies should be followed to confirm that findings are the results of experiences and ideas of participants. Member-checking was used to confirm that the interview transcripts were accurate. This is a process that enables the researcher to minimise bias and preconceived ideas about the experience of teacher development.

### **3.7.3 Credibility**

A qualitative study is credible “when it presents such accurate descriptions or interpretation of human experience that people who also share the same experience would immediately recognise the descriptions” (White, 2005:203). Credibility relates to internal validity where the aims of the study are explained to ensure the inquiry is conducted in a manner accurately



identified and described (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2002:24). Internal validity seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event or issue can actually be sustained by the data (Cohen et al., 2005). This study captured and displayed the reality from the perspectives of the participants, whose exact words were recorded, with field notes used to counter potential bias. To achieve credibility much time was spent in the sampled schools to make observations and collect data.

#### **3.7.4 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to other settings and contexts. I wrote a thick description of the research situation and context so that people who read this document can ascertain whether and to what extent the research results are valid or can be useful in their own situation or context (White, 2005:202). Singh (2013:202) agrees that transferability means the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other context or settings. Research steps were explained to make sure that the reader understands the coherence of this study.

### **3.8 DATA-GATHERING TECHNIQUES**

I used three methods of data collection: interviews. These tools are pertinent to this study, and were focused on answering the research question. As such, the questions were formulated to probe the participants' understandings of their roles in TPD. The data gathered informed the researcher about the interactive process between principals and teachers. The tools will further highlighted the qualitative nature of these interactions and will help in understanding the 'why' and 'how' of TPD (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:356).

#### **3.8.1 Interviews**

Interviews remain the most common data-collection method in qualitative research and are a familiar and flexible way of asking people about their opinions and experiences. A research interview is a two-person conversation "initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focusing on the content specified by the research objectives or explanation" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:356). Interviewing is a data-collection tool typically involving the researcher asking questions and the participants giving answers to the questions posed. In this process, the participants are given full liberty

to frame their answers and to add any information they deem important. Even in the case of an interview guide, the interviewer allows for probes and pauses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:356). The advantage of interviews is that they provide access to a person's thinking, what he or she likes or dislikes (values and preferences) and thinks (attitudes and beliefs), or information concerning a particular issue (White, 2005:141).

One attraction for researchers is that a considerable amount of data can be generated from an interview lasting one to two hours, although considerable time may be spent setting up the interview and subsequently analysing it. Qualitative interviews are generally described as either being structured or semi-structured – the latter being adopted by this study. These are based on a series of open-ended questions about a series of issues the researcher thinks are relevant to the topic.

The researcher also acknowledges the limitations of interviews, one of which is that they involve personal interaction, and therefore, cooperation between the researcher and the participants cannot be guaranteed. Participants may also be unwilling to share the information and the researcher might ask questions that do not evoke the desired response from participants. Alternatively, the responses may be untruthful (Mahlo, 2011:94). These interviews are aimed at identifying the role of principals on TPD. For its findings and conclusions, this study relies entirely on the information given by participants during interviews. It was, therefore, important to make certain that the interview process became effective and reliable.

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

#### **3.9.1 Permission letter**

The researcher is responsible for ethical standards for her or his research. As a researcher, I considered what would be morally correct when dealing with participants. According to De Vos (2011:11), ethics are a "set of moral principles which are suggested by an individual or group and are widely accepted". Ethics offer "rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers and students". For White (2005:210), ethics generally refers to beliefs about what is right or wrong and offer "rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects". These principles are:

- Respect and courtesy – every interviewee was treated with dignity.
- Acceptance and understanding – the interviewer did not make the interviewees feel inferior.
- Confidentiality – when the permission to enter the field is obtained, participants need to have confidence in the researcher that the data will be used for the stated intended purpose. Confidentiality and anonymity in description of research setting is tantamount to good research ethics (Lesego 2009:116). According to Mouton (2009:243), participants have the right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, the right to full disclosure about the research, the right not to be harmed in any way, and as such, the rights of vulnerable groups should be respected. The information provided by the interviewees was treated as confidential and their identity concealed in all aspects;
- Integrity – the interviewer did not raise false expectations; and
- Individualisation – the interviewer showed empathy and understanding, relatedness, sincerity and honesty.

### **3.9.2 Access to Research Sites**

Before conducting the empirical research, access was negotiated with the gatekeepers in the Department of Basic Education at the district and provincial levels by requesting permission to conduct the study (see Appendix A). Once permission was granted ( see Appendix B), the sampled schools were given a letter( see Appendix C and D) that informed the principal and participants of the aim of the study, before the research was conducted. The principal of each school was asked to negotiate with the teachers to allow me to conduct the research (see Appendix C).

### **3.9.3 Voluntary Participation**

Participants were not forced to participate and were not victimised in any way for not taking part. Participation was voluntary with no coercion, force, threat or intimidation to give information to the researcher (White 2005:211).

### **3.9.4 Informed Consent**

As proposed by Newby (2010:257), letters of request to the schools and individuals must be written and disclose fully the nature of the study, purpose of the study, data-collection methods and participation will made known to the participants. He further states that

consent is more than a signature on a form (see Appendix E) and emphasises that people must understand the basis on which they are participating. Informed consent reduces the chances that the researcher may defraud or abuse research participants or obtain personal information for unethical reasons (Neuman, 2011:69).

The researcher drew up a consent form in which issues about research were explained, and the participants' willingness to partake in the research and signed it. These documents were filed by the researcher and kept safely as proof that the respondents had agreed to participate, in case of queries.

### **3.9.5 Anonymity**

Participants were considered anonymous where the researcher did not identify a given response with a given respondent (White, 2005:210). Data that were collected were kept confidential, and were only used for research purposes. Personal information was not requested from participants. All participants in this research remained anonymous.

### **3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter outlined the research methodology, the research design, sample and sampling procedures, data-gathering techniques, ethical considerations. Issues of trustworthiness, validity and reliability were explained to ensure the credibility and authenticity of this research to other researchers. This study employed the qualitative approach and the rationale behind this choice was explained. Data-collection techniques for this study were semi-structured interviews and observations. In the next chapter, the data generated by using the research methodology are presented and the findings are discussed.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter outlined the research methodology and the research processes. The aim of this chapter is to present the findings from the interviews. This chapter reports on the data collected at five primary schools in the Ekurhuleni district where principals, deputy principals, head of department and teachers participated. They were selected to share their views and understanding on the role of principals in TPD. Data presented and analysed in this chapter seeks to find answers to the following sub-questions:

- How do principals perceive their roles in teacher development?
- What kind of professional development support do principals give to teachers?
- What practices do principals use with regard to teacher development in their schools?

The participants selected were relevant to this study and were considered to be information-rich informants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:326). Since this is a qualitative study, direct quotations or excerpts have been used to support the results presented and to give a vivid picture of their views using their unedited words in some instances. Mouton (2005:108-109) posits that analysis involves “breaking up of data into manageable themes or categories” in order to understand all its aspects. After describing it, data were organised into distinct themes. Data on the role of principals in TPD are presented in table format using the themes listed below.

- Understanding of TPD;
- Strategies used for TPD;
- Challenges faced in TPD;
- Intervention measures on the challenges encountered; and
- The impact of TPD.

## 4.2 THE PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study were teachers, HODs, deputy principals and principals from five primary schools of Ekurhuleni South District. To uphold the principle of anonymity, the schools and participants were code-named.

Table 4.1: Description of participants

NAME OF SCHOOL	PARTICIPANT	ATTENDED TPD STRATEGY IN THE LAST 10 YEARS	WHICH PHASE	NO OF YRS IN SCHOOL	GENDER
School A	TEACHER - A	Yes – curriculum	F/Phase	32	Female
	HOD - A	Yes – curriculum and management	F/Phase	10	Female
	PRINCIPAL-A	No	I/Phase	30	Male
School B	TEACHER- B	Yes - curriculum	F/Phase	8	Female
	HOD- B	Yes – curriculum and management	F/Phase	11	Female
	DEP.B	Yes – management	F/Phase	13	Female
	PRINCIPAL-B	No	I/Phase	12	Male
School C	TEACHER-C	Yes – curriculum	F/Phase	5	Female
	HOD-C	Yes – curriculum and management	F/Phase	12	Female
	DEP. PRINCIPAL-C	Yes – management	F/Phase	30	Female
	PRINCIPAL-C	No	I/Phase	10	Male
School D	TEACHER -D	Yes – curriculum	F/Phase	35	Female
	HOD-D	Yes – curriculum and management	F/Phase	30	Female
	DEP. PRINCIPAL	Yes – management	I/Phase	20	Male
	PRINCIPAL-D	No	I/Phase	10	Female
School E	TEACHER-E	Yes - curriculum	F/Phase	20	Female
	HOD-E	Yes – curriculum and management	F/Phase	27	Male
	DEP. PRINCIPAL	Yes – management	I/Phase	15	Male
	PRINCIPAL-E	No	I/Phase	23	Female

Table 4.1 indicates the nature of TPD workshops that were attended by the participants. It also shows that the participants' number of years teaching at the same school ranged from 5–35. Teaching experience was taken into consideration when selecting participants to ensure that both younger and older teachers were involved. The participants indicated that

they had attended the TPD workshops on either curriculum or management issues, and as such, the information they provided was relevant.

### **4.3. DATA PRESENTATION**

Data presented in this chapter were generated from interviews and the subsequent themes that emerged.

#### **4.3.1 Conceptualisation of Teacher Professional Development**

The opening question probed the views of participants about TPD in order to see their level of consciousness as practising teachers. The level of understanding was determined. The purpose was to see whether participants showed their understanding using similar phrases and narratives. In articulating their understandings of the concept 'professional development', the participants agreed that it is about an ongoing process of developing teachers in the area of content knowledge so as to enhance their pedagogical and teaching skills.

Their common understanding was that this development is personal and it differs from one teacher to another. Specifically, the views of Teachers A, B and E concerning what TPD is, are stated verbatim below.

Teacher A explained thus: *"Eish..., I think it is to equip [and] empower teachers; yes... giving more information, and adding more knowledge to what I already know."*

Along the same lines, Teacher-E indicated: *"It is whereby teachers attend workshops for development and seminars and also where they upgrade their profession."*

Teacher B added an important dimension to the discussion by clarifying that the development that the teacher acquires should be relevant to the actual teaching and learning environment. He stated that the focus of that development should promote effective teaching and learning that would enhance student achievement. In his own unedited words, he stated: *"It is the development of a teacher within a professional environment e.g. how to behave, what skills [are] needed to do certain tasks etc."*

As stated by Sangster, Stone and Anderson (2013:619), both Teacher A and Teacher B agreed that professional development is an ongoing process of reflection and review executed by

means of development planning that meets corporate, departmental and individual needs, the learning process of self-development leading to personal growth as well as development of skills and knowledge that facilitate education. Teacher-C also highlighted how she viewed TPD thus: *“Teacher professional development is about attending workshops or trade union sessions with an aim of developing teachers with relevant stakeholders so that they can be equipped with new developments of the curriculum.”*

As SACE (DBE, 2011:4) indicates, teachers are solely responsible for their own ongoing professional development based on their identified areas of need. Teacher D reaffirmed this as follows: *“It is an ongoing process development whereby teachers themselves identify their weaknesses and strengths. They build on those for proper development needed by each teacher.”*

HOD-D concurred with Teacher D as follows:

*It is an ongoing process whereby educators are upgrading themselves by means of attending workshops, SBWs and sharing information with peers. They indicate their areas of need. We also see their shortfalls through IQMS processes. They build on these for proper development.*

The responses of the HODs were not at variance with what teachers mentioned with regard to TPD. They used different words and phrases but at the end portrayed common understanding. Sangster, Stone and Anderson (2013:619) further indicates that deputy principals, as part of the school management, viewed professional development as a learning process that addresses the individual needs of each teacher with the aim of improving personal growth, developmental skills and knowledge that facilitate education. Deputy Principal-A expressed this as follows:

*.... I view it as a way of advancing yourself in your carrier. Developing skills need [one] to attend workshops. Knowledge keeps on changing. Research the changes in curriculum. You go to class without development and you will fail. The whole environment of school needs development – developing teachers and upgrading them. Empower them because curriculum changes all the time in South Africa because of political instability.*



The participants from all the groups, that is, teachers and principals, gave similar responses concerning TPD. These participants emphasised the importance of empowering teachers using different strategies to enhance teaching and learning. They asserted that the programme of development must be an ongoing process as the curriculum also changes over time. Principal-A indicated that teachers needed feedback from their superiors after they had indicated their area of need in the following way.

*Teacher professional development is nothing but development of teachers. As a principal, I give the feedback to teachers, and I take [that] as development. I give them that information to develop the whole staff. Development is in many ways....er ... sometimes I delegate some duties with an aim of developing my subordinates. You know as principals we are always busy.*

#### **4.3.2 The Strategies used by Principals to develop their Teachers**

In order to get a sense of some teacher development strategies used by different principals in the Ekurhuleni South District schools to support teachers, a question was posed concerning this. This question was also intended to give the participants a chance to indicate their preferences for TPD strategies that they considered effective and could have an impact on teaching and learning. All the participants indicated that there were few or no training workshops organised by principals in their schools.

They indicated that they depended on the district for the in-service training and workshops. Teacher A mentioned that she needed training on how to deal with discipline of learners in an overcrowded class.

Du Plessis (2007:105) indicates that some teachers fail to use their provision of eight hours per year for professional development stipulated in ELRC because of work overload from overcrowding. In this respect, Teacher A elaborated:

*Workshops in our school.....yooh....I indicated these needs to the management, but the principal never arranged any workshops to address our needs. Our problem is discipline of learners in their classrooms. Our classes are overcrowded. I need development in CAPS. I thought that I know, but I discover that I'm lacking some methodology. I'm not computer literate and that is frustrating me. We indicated*

*that we need a workshop on chalkboard writing in Grade 1 that helps with formulation of sounds. Our principal laughed at us because she does not understand foundation phase. It is a shame....; she is totally clueless about our phase and it hurts me. In this phase, we lay the foundation, and yet we are taken for granted.*

Teacher-C further explained: *"I need training on how to handle ill-disciplined learners for effective/conducive teaching and learning atmosphere. I indicated that in the school improvement plan..., haaa, still waiting till today. Is our principal aware that he must develop us?"*

In order to address their professional needs, teachers reported that, in some instances, they formed groups in social networks that they found to be a popular and an effective method to cascade information. Teachers share information in these platforms like WhatsApp groups. Teacher B indicated that this social network saved them time and money. A lack of these resources was found to be a barrier to the development of teachers. Teacher B clarified this further as follows:

*I can suggest some strategies, but our principal, I think, he needs development himself. Creating WhatsApp groups as teachers, I think that can assist us to remind each other about the requirements of the Department. Sometimes it helps us. It saves time and money [because] to go to the workshops is always a challenge in our schools. My principal is so incompetent...; he wants good results but no development. We only attend workshops arranged by the district not him.*

Teachers in this discussion mentioned time management and inclusion as some of the challenging areas that they would like to be trained on. Apparently, the developmental sessions that addressed their concerns were never arranged by the principal. Teacher-E further indicated that the principal did not appear to be aware that development of teachers was his responsibility. However, Hellsten (2013:10) stresses that one of the primary roles of principals is instructional leadership, which is basically to develop teachers according to their areas of need. Teacher-E remarked: *"Training on how to record marks using SASAMS was done by [the] district office. We asked for time management and intervention strategies for learners who are struggling in class. We are still sitting with that challenge. I don't remember him arranging workshops for us within the school."*

Teacher D added:

*Content training is needed in our phase more especially to novice teachers.....mm... hayi (no); my principal has never arranged any workshops for us. Does he know that he has a responsibility to develop us? Maybe he can try to assist in intermediate and senior phases; with foundation phase, he is clueless. Workshops, teacher training so that we become abreast with curriculum changes we need them. My principal must enrol and study the education management and leadership degree that I have done. It will tell him to know that he is responsible for my development.*

All the teachers from different schools indicated a need for development that needs to be prioritised by principals in order to enhance teaching and learning. They also viewed their professional development as a tool that could enhance learner achievement in their schools. Developmental workshops on time management also sufficed in the discussions I had with HOD-B. As an HOD in foundation phase, she also claimed that she had a class to teach and did not have a free period so that she could do her management work.

*I mentioned several times during my IQMS that I need development in completing CMM form A that needs us to write the percentage of content coverage and SBA, analysis of results, item analysis, [and] IQMS class visits. Till today, I'm still waiting for that development. The principal goes on and on with admissions and it frustrate us to get learners at any time; that needs support. I asked for a workshop for time management ....dololo [nothing]. Our classes are overcrowded and in terms of marking, I suffer. I'm always behind. Now tell me.....how can one be expected to mark all the books for 80 learners? I am an HOD....I have a class and I must monitor and support other teachers...tell me when. Really when? Under that leadership, we are doomed. He is not capacitated to be a principal.*

HOD-E pointed out an issue of insubordination from the group of teachers that she was managing. This HOD also mentioned a lack of money as a hindrance that contributed to their non-attendance of workshops organised by the principal:

*A workshop on how to deal with teachers under my supervision if they don't want to comply with submission dates was requested and I was not helped. My principal*

*does not support us at all. How can I assist them to finish the task at hand in the time frames indicated? I'm sorry to disappoint you, ma'am; no workshops were organised because our school does not have money.*

From the interview, it emerged that the responsibility for the development of teachers was delegated to Deputy Principal-A. This deputy also indicated that he did not have the necessary skills to do this. The deputy reported that he had asked if they could engage a service provider to assist them; however, this was hampered by a lack of money. In this respect, Deputy Principal-A disclosed thus,

*My principal is delegating all the duties of developing teachers to me, and sometimes I don't have skills too. She is passing the buck, and teachers in the school, more especially foundation phase are suffering. The principal does not want to outsource; he claims there are no resources, the school is poor. Performance of learners informs us what is actually a challenge to different teachers.*

Principal-A also echoed the challenge posed by a lack of resources to teachers' development. He viewed the role of teacher development in his school as the responsibility of his deputy. He stated thus:

*The deputy principal is supposed to arrange internal workshops or outsource if there is no personnel to assist about that particular programme within our school. However, we cannot outsource because the school does not have resources to do so. We do not have money.*

Deputy Principal-B and Principal-B agreed on the same strategy that they used as management to develop their teachers. However, the time factor was also seen as a barrier to arranging developmental workshops within the school by the principal. In this regard, Deputy Principal-B posited:

*Every educator must have a personal growth plan and also developmental management plan. In our case, a teacher writes that in the growth plan and requires some development. We have a challenge of time. Even if we want to arrange workshops, but we do not have time?"*

Principal-B added that he was also overwhelmed by too much administration work as follows:

*Ongoing instruction over a period of time offers ongoing support throughout development. Give continuous feedback on how the processes [are] going, but when ma'am ... tell me when. These people get tired. District office arranges many workshops and the teachers complain ... some of those workshops are not relevant to their needs, but because the employer is them, therefore, I must release them. I don't have time either to develop them ... my plate is too full.*

Deputy Principal-D posited that they used potential teachers from within the school who seemed to be stronger on certain aspects of content delivery to assist others in the following way: *"The principal uses SWOT analysis where she delegates each teacher based on his/her strengths/weakness. She usually organises developmental workshops with the department."*

Principal-D agreed with Teacher D, HOD-D and Deputy Principal-D in this manner: *"Mini-workshops to focus on a specific area are done within the school using peer educators. Yes, I acknowledge that it is not enough. I am also limited by resources. Time also is a barrier."*

While Deputy Principal-D indicated that development was taking place in his school, Deputy Principal-E expressed the desire for this in his school this way, *"Eish, ma'am, such developments are needed in this school. Information-sharing sessions are needed. Workshop and training courses are needed. Maybe one day the principal will assist."*

The above excerpts reveal that some school principals do not view TPD as their responsibility. Most comments by participants from Schools A, B, C and E revealed that, even though they believed that the developmental strategies were necessary interventions to the challenges that teachers encountered, the support from the school principal was minimal or non-existent. However, the principal in School D, was doing her level best in making some effort to develop her staff members even though she indicated a lack of time and resources as barriers.

#### **4.3.3 The Barriers to Teacher Professional Development**

This question was posed to principals, deputy principals, HODs and teachers regarding the challenges that they encountered that hindered teacher development in their schools. Most responses highlighted limited funds as a major challenge. In turn, this created some

weaknesses and challenges in teaching and learning. It also emerged from the interviews that some teachers did not attend the workshops even though they claimed money for workshop attendance. Some deputy principals highlighted problems with overcrowding of learners in classrooms, late submissions of required documents and unavailability of support from the principals and non-attendance or boycotting of the workshops organised by the district education office because of the mandate from their teacher unions. In this regard, Teacher A explained:

*Most of the time, we are told by our unions not to attend the workshops organised by our district office. My principal himself is the regional office bearer of SADTU. He doesn't develop us within, yet he stops us from attending these meetings. We suffer because we don't get information.*

In the same vein, Teacher-E added:

*Our school is silently managed by teachers that belong to SADTU. There was a time last year where we were told not to attend any programme organised by the district. We chased away the facilitators in our school. So, our performance is not good because we don't want district officials to help us. Now tell me, ma'am, ... what kind of school is allowing certain political influence to rule? And these teachers are not having their learners here; their children are in ex-model C schools.*

The essence of the sentiments expressed by the participant was that at this school, a teacher union had taken over control of the school, and that it stopped them from attending workshops or development functions organised by the district facilitators. Principal-E confirmed that teacher unions had a great influence on the non-attendance or boycotting of workshops organised by the district. During this interview, the researcher observed the cold facial expression of Principal-E as she mentioned the issue of the interference of the unions in the management of the school thus: *"Teachers' attitudes towards this profession is [are] negative. Teachers want to earn money, but they don't want to work for it. These teachers listen to our unions. If the SADTU says no workshops, then that is it."*

In order to neutralise the influence of unions in the running of the school, HOD-E suggested that the SMT should not be affiliated to any teacher union in this way: *"I don't want to say much, but managers or leaders must not belong to a certain union because they tend to unionise the entire school. The teachers don't attend most workshops because their unions stopped them."*

Multiple sources of influence on teacher management, especially those that are outside the school cause unnecessary confusion, competition and contestation. When commenting on the attitudes of some teachers to workshops, Deputy Principal-C highlighted what she observed as laziness among teachers in her school. The facial expression and her hands as she was talking showed that this is something that they could not control: *"Some are just lazy. Yes, money for petrol is a challenge, but these teachers are also lazy. They say they are tired after school. Maybe the districts must use holidays for workshops."*

The statement by Principal-A below shows that he was aware of the non-attendance of workshops by teachers. While it was reported that these teachers did not attend workshops, this principal seemed to be helpless and to have run out of ideas on how to correct the situation. To confirm this, Principal-A disclosed: *“Teachers do not attend workshops. They claim to be exhausted and drained and I cannot force them.”*

HOD-B indicated that attending workshops in the afternoons was not effective because teachers were tired and could not understand the facilitator. As expressed below, she indicated that they just attended to comply with the directives.

*We are no-fee-paying school; our challenge is providing resources needed like providing money for workshops and conferences. Improvement must be done internally. On the other side, when must we attend ... in the afternoons we are extremely tired. When you attend, it's just compliance.*

Some participants indicated that there were teachers who were willing to attend workshops to an extent that they would use their own money to attend. However, they viewed time as a barrier towards the attendance of workshops. Teacher B emphasised this thus:

*Time is a huge constraint. Teachers are constantly pressed for time to complete all tasks and administration. So, time is a barrier. Afternoon workshops are not enough for all the information. We struggle to even get money to attend the workshops. The school sometimes claim that they do not have funds, so we must take our own money and attend those workshops.*

Teacher D reported that she attended the workshops that were organised by the district. However, she disclosed that the implementation of what was learned from the workshops was a challenge due to overcrowding in the classrooms. Continuous admissions have an impact on backlogs in content delivery. Digital literacy is also a challenge to learners in foundation phase who have not been exposed to ICT gadgets as expressed in the response below:

*Overcrowding of classes and late admissions are our huge challenge. Even if I go to workshops organised by the district, it is difficult to implement because of overcrowding of classes. The school as well, is forever admitting learners. I can't*



*keep on going backward, otherwise, I will have backlogs in curriculum delivery and that will affect my IQMS. Admission of learners in Grade 1, – those that did not attend grade R are not ready for school is a challenge. Processes of IQMS, ICT smart boards, tablets and laptops also pose a challenge.*

Teacher B also mentioned her challenge of digital illiteracy to be a barrier to quality teaching and learning not only to her, but also to other teachers in South African classrooms today. She indicated that she requested training on how to use technological gadgets in foundation phase as she was lacking in this area as follows.

*I asked for a training session as a person that was born before technology from the management. The principal promised us regular training on how to use smart boards. I am still waiting and now it's term 3, I am failing my learners. Our school is gradually moving away from chalk and chalkboard to digital smart boards; I can't teach my learners formulation of sounds correctly on that smart board. I found myself as a barrier to teaching and learning using technology. I also need support, otherwise, now I found myself learning with them.*

In concurrence with the above excerpt, Trna and Trnova (2010:210) emphasised that teachers need to be equipped with new competencies and innovative professional skills.

The challenge of digital literacy does not only affect learners, but it also affects teachers as seen in the response below by HOD-D, which echoed the sentiments of Teacher B on this matter:

*Most teachers here are old and lazy to attend workshops. They don't want to come back and give feedback as well. Most teachers that were born before computers are challenged by this world we are moving in. Most teachers in foundation phase want to resign because they do not know computers. Only Fundza Lushaka teachers attend workshops.*

Deputy Principal-C indicated that some teachers did not want to study or attend workshops because they claimed that they were old and tired. They were apparently demotivated by the systems in place within the education system. Demotivated teachers become the barrier to their own personal growth. This is in contrast to Bipath's (2008:79) contention that motivation

is a force and a generator of energy and persistence even in the midst of challenges. Teacher demotivation stems from various factors as noted respectively by Deputy Principal-D below.

*Most teachers in our school are about to exit the system. They are demotivated by too much administration, introduction of ICT and quantity versus quality in teaching and planning. They don't value the importance of attending developmental workshops. The expectation is too much; they are swamped in a lot of work.*

Principal-D found old teachers to be demoralised, as stated below: *"Old teachers in the system are demoralised; they are only waiting for their pension, and they refuse to change. I have five of them in foundation phase that are exiting the system in 2019."*

Principal-B looked at a lack of motivation from another angle, namely that teachers were overwhelmed by a lot of work, and expressed this thus: *"Too many conflicting priorities competing for the teacher's time. These teachers are not superman....no guys. Their plates are too full; hence, our teachers are always admitted in mental disorder hospital."*

The above excerpts highlight the challenges that surround TPD within the South African context. Essentially, professional development involves professional qualities, aptitudes, techniques and skills. HOD-A and HOD-B seemed to have a challenge with the workshops that they attended as they questioned the techniques and approaches used by the district officials who facilitated because they did not address their needs. These HODs indicated that the district facilitators disclosed the purpose of the training to them as trainees as well as the outcome, yet the content did not address the goals to be reached. At the end of training sessions, facilitators did not find out from teachers as trainees if their goals were successful. According to the officials, the development was done and accomplished without getting feedback from the trainees.

The HODs reported that some facilitators were primarily not concerned about achieving the improvement of teachers' skills that would enhance teaching and learning. Instead, as Phorabatho (2013:48) stated, they used bureaucratic methods of TPD, which were not effective. An excerpt below from HOD-A underscores a misalignment between the information presented by the facilitators and teachers' pedagogical requirements.

*Mm...thinking about capacitating. It's [the] information to keep abreast about [of] new development. Equip them with skills that are relevant because curriculum changes and we need to empower, to increase knowledge and support. It is about improving, clarifying, and adding more skills, methodology of individual teacher. I have a problem with some of the facilitators from our district that are not competent. They impose some irrelevant information that is totally not talking to my needs. I don't want to attend their workshops as they do not address my challenges.*

HOD-B concurred as follows: *"It is about improving, clarifying and adding more skills, and the methodology of the individual teacher. The boring part here is that, I attend those developmental forums and come back the same. They are not addressing my area of need"*

Furthermore, Deputy Principal-D identified a lack of commitment from some teachers as a challenge, though he viewed it as an important aspect of professional development. Yoon, et al. (2007:1), and Steyn (2007:116) are in collective agreement that TPD leads to profound knowledge of specific subject content and improved teacher efficiency. The commitment of teachers is also identified as the inner drive of the individual teacher towards his or her own professional development. Deputy Principal-D confirmed this as follows:

*Development needs inner drive; an individual must be self-driven and this is a foreign language to our teachers. A teacher empowers himself or herself so as to be more developed about the content knowledge of the subject he/she is teaching. It is helping in terms of personal growth. Wise teachers enrol with different institutions to upgrade their studies.*

The above voices highlight different challenges that either demoralised teachers or hindered their development in schools. These included the interference of teacher unions, inadequate resources, digital illiteracy, and a lack of motivation among teachers to engage in professional development.

#### **4.3.4 The Interventions for Challenges Encountered in Teacher Professional Development**

The question was posed to check if there were any interventions to address the challenges that hindered TPD. While the participants mentioned some interventions that they thought

could work, they reported that they had not seen any changes. Teacher A indicated that he/she was a member of the WhatsApp group of HODs where they assisted each other by disseminating information and reminding each other about agreed activities. This teacher shared the following information:

*As individuals, we ask questions in our group chats of teachers organised by our district official about what was discussed in the workshops. But that is not enough because if you don't hear the information first-hand, then the second conveyor does not deliver the message as it was said by the first speaker.*

Teacher B and Teacher C indicated that organised workshops could be used as a strategy. However, they suggested that these workshops should ideally be held on Saturdays or during the school holidays. Teacher C added by saying that principals should take a lead in organising development workshops as follows:

*If we can have workshops during school holidays. Workshops for Saturdays are also working for me. At least I am not tired and hungry. How can an exhausted person be able to concentrate? District office must organise workshops during school holidays; that way they it would have an impact on learner achievement.*

Teacher C added:

*It was discussed in a strategic meeting that we need workshops on how to manage time so as to avoid backlogs; still today, the principal did nothing. He is forever not at school. It would be proper if the principal takes a lead in implementing so that teachers would also take ownership without feeling burdened.*

Most teachers indicated that the distance they travelled to attend the workshops was long and awkward as they did not have cars. They reported that sometimes the school claimed that it did not have funds, and so they used their own money because they needed development. Principal-C considered organising workshops in a central place near teachers to be crucial as it made it possible for them to attend. With regard to the overload of administrative work on teachers, which affected teaching time, Teacher D concurred with

Principal-C thus: *“The district must organise the workshops near to us in the location. It will also be nice as a school if we have a minibus. It can minimise the funds of paying individuals also reducing more administrative work for teachers, as paperwork takes a lot of time.”*

Teacher D concurred as follows:

*Positive development is crucial as it eases some of the burdens, thus promoting healthy environment for teaching. There is not more administrative work. The principal wants good results and fights with us if we have backlog. He overlooks the paper work needed from us by our district office. Too much administrative work [that is] more than teaching must stop.*

Teacher-E suggested that teachers should enrol at universities for their own development because:

*There are no intervention programmes except that individual teachers are developing themselves by studying. The school must conduct the workshops whereby all teachers will raise problems they are facing in class, and discussions should be made based on development. Principals don't know that they are responsible for our own development. Our principal must be told by the district office to organise some internal workshops.*

HOD-D mentioned a fundamental ethic and self-management. She likened some teachers to wheelbarrows, which needed to be pushed even for their own development. She asserted that teachers needed to police themselves, take money from the office and honestly attend workshops: In her own words, she said teachers should: *“Organise workshops and practise self-management; they must learn to manage themselves and attend workshops faithfully. The principal should allow all the departments to grow without interference.”*

However, Deputy Principal-B gave an answer that can work towards non-attendance of teachers dodging workshops said: *“The school requests for the register from the district to track whether teachers attended the workshop. All teachers that attends workshop must come back to school and give a feedback.”*

When teachers know that they would be expected to give feedback, they tend to attend workshops. Deputy Principal-C stressed that in her school teachers were expected to give feedback to other teachers who did not attend the workshop and share the information in the following way: *“The principal expects each teacher that attended the workshop to come back with a feedback to other teachers that did not attend.”*

In-house workshops and seminars were mentioned as intervention strategies that can assist teachers without spending a lot of money by HOD-E thus, *“The principal expects the HOD to conduct internal workshops and attend seminars that assist teachers locally. As an HOD, I also need development from him. Principals must organise workshops for HODs, where HODs can share ideas and good practices.”*

When the HOD indicated that she also needed development, her facial expression also changed. She insisted that seminars should be structured in an individualised manner that would address the individual challenges of teachers, and not through a one-size-fits-all approach. Deputy Principal-A suggested professional learning groups as a good strategy that would provide the professional development needs of teachers in the following manner,

*Hey...ma’am, the honest truth is that this challenge of development will not be solved in our school up until the culture of this school changes. Teachers are managed under lazy laissez-faire management system. ... To answer your question, I think professional learning groups must be established even though some teachers might not attend.*

Deputy Principal-D expressed a concern about overcrowding, which led to ill-discipline of learners in the following manner:

*The issue of overcrowding is still a challenge. The department promised us mobile classes that never came. The SGB must knock on the doors of companies and ask for donations so that they can build new classes or buying mobile classes while they are waiting for the promised mobile classes.*

Principal-B further elaborated: *“Continued support is very important. Teachers need to be supported to implement new ideas by the school. However, these interventions are not materialising as teachers in my school are divided by teacher unions.”*

Motivation that is driven by principals can have an effective impact on teachers. Motivation is a force that can be viewed as a generator of energy to behaviour, gives direction to behaviour and underlines the tendency for positive behaviour to persist, even in the face of difficulties (Bipath, 2008:79). Van Deventer and Kruger (2005:153) propose that principals should influence teachers to undertake TPD in order to improve the outcomes of the school. Principal-D agreed with this thus,

*By acknowledging, motivating and respecting teachers and understanding that we are all unique. Teamwork also helps us to understand each other's strengths. For now, I am still struggling to win the teachers. They tell me straight that they are exiting the system, so they are waiting for their day.*

The above excerpt highlights the uniqueness of every teacher and the fact that one-size-fits-all form of motivation would not inspire and ignite the energy of all teachers in the same way. If teachers do not understand the way subject advisors facilitate, then they can indicate how they want to be trained. Some teachers are moved by intrinsic motivation while others prefer extrinsic motivation.

#### **4.3.5 The Impact of Teacher Professional Development on Teaching and Learning**

A question was posed to participants as to whether they saw the impact of TPD in their schools. They responded that there was little improvement in terms of tracking curriculum coverage, although it was reported that some teachers who attended workshops did indeed implement what they had learned. However, they indicated that the implementation was minimal, taking into consideration other challenges of lack of resources and overcrowding. Teacher A explained this thus,

*With the little that we have in terms of resources, we try; hence, very minimal school performance improves for the betterment...; what about that overcrowding....how can you teach effectively in a class of 60 learners in Grade 1 Where are mobile classes that the Department promised? I cannot even support those that are having difficulties.*

The overcrowding that the teacher complained about led to disregard for support to those learners who needed it and inclusive education. Teacher B clarified this as follows,

*The development of educators should be aligned with learner performance; developed educators should be able to achieve outlined objectives and be more confident in teaching the subject. But here we don't have resources at all. Even if we attend those workshops ... eish ma'am, resources in this school are a serious problem. It's true that we don't do justice to learners.*

The responses from Teacher A and Teacher B revealed that they are facing serious challenges in terms of implementing the information acquired from the workshops. This indicates that additional support is needed in schools. Teacher A admitted that there was no support rendered to learners facing difficulties due to overcrowding in the classrooms. HOD-A was emotional when she answered as follows:

*The Department is failing us, madam; they promised three mobile classes. Those teachers and learners are suffocating in those two classes. We also need two more teachers coupled with those mobile classes. We are identified as an underperforming school...so there is no improvement here.*

From the above response, it is evident that waiting for mobile classes had been too long; hence the frustrations mentioned by the teacher on this matter. In this respect, HOD-B revealed that the conditions that teachers worked under were demoralising as follows: *"For now, improvement is like Father Christmas to us; having these challenges I have mentioned before, we really can't see improvements. Our classes are too full. They look like a stadium. This situation is demoralising."*

Deputy Principal-A also confirmed the challenge of overcrowding in these words: *"The impact is not yet visible; we are hoping that if we can address the issue of overcrowding, more especially in the exiting grades, we will be able to see improvement. We are trying our level best to look for sponsors that can build maybe classes for us."*

Principal-B also added that:

*It is difficult to work under such conditions I have mentioned in the beginning. Those teachers are really trying. We currently use the staffroom as a class. The district keeps on sending learners to us; we are told, ma'am, that we cannot declare the*



*schools full. Now at the end of the day, the impact of that is bad. We are not moving, ma'am.*

Teacher C indicated that there was little improvement in her class, but stated that she was dissatisfied with it. She explained:

*Personally ma'am, I am not happy at all with the improvement I am making in my class. The whole term 2 and 3, we did not go to any workshops because unions stopped us ... let alone writing standardised papers from the Department. Their interference is yielding these poor results we get ... look, ma'am, my learner average ... it's too low.*

Teacher D noted that the behaviour of learners showed some improvement. She also indicated that even though there was improvement in terms of behaviour, they still struggled with learner performance:

*The behaviour improves; the results or learner performance does not improve irrespective of how our principal is supporting us. Look at these facilities ... These walls are dilapidated. The school is old and our environment here is bad. These premises are not conducive for teaching and learning.*

HOD-D concurred with the above assertion that improvement in his school was minimal because the environment was not conducive for teaching and learning. He stated this as follows: *"There is slight improvement on learners' achievements. However, great improvement will be seen if our school can be renovated so that the environment can be conducive for teaching and learning. We have good leadership but no resources."*

Teacher-E strongly complained about a lack of leadership skills that led to poor performance of the school in the following manner:

*I will be frank with you, lady ... this school doesn't have leadership. Our leader does not have the interest of this school at heart. Leadership skills are needed. The teacher remains with little information and poor delivery in the class because we don't get development. If there is no development of teachers therefore being identified as underperforming school suits us?*

HOD-E said the following showed lack of progress in terms of learner performance:

*As I'm talking to you we have been identified as underperforming school. We have been underperforming for three years in a row. The culture of teaching and learning in this school is the thing of the past because of poor management skills. I wish we can improve but our principal does not have a vision.*

One of the members of the SMT said there was a need for change in the leadership of the school. Deputy Principal-E endorsed corroborated this thus: *"The SMT of this school needs to do introspection. We cannot behave this way as managers of the school and expect teachers to do well. We need to be role models of progress in terms of teaching and learning. We need to find our purpose of being in this school."*

Principal-E indicated that there was a toxic atmosphere among staff, a situation he characterised as diarrhoea. He mentioned that he also needed development in order to support his staff. He expressed his sentiments regarding the hostile school environment in the following way:

*Change does not start drastically. There is a slight change in their behaviour as teachers, and I hope that it will affect their work. Once I deal with their attitudes, then I will be able to put systems in place. We had an issue of character diarrhoea. I hope to see that affect our learner performance in future. As a principal, I also need development on how to deal with adults that lack a sense of accountability. I also need to be equipped by managers on how to deal with rebellious teachers; that hinders progress in my school and that is lacking. When you correct teachers here, they take you to unions. Then they think they are untouchable. When I am going to get support as a principal?*

Deputy Principal-C stated that he would like to see significant improvement in the school through TPD. The deputy principal indicated that liberal teachers tended to have a negative influence on school performance thus,

*Progression and improvement are sweet ... hahaha, but we see it slightly. We hope that if we can have focus on developmental programmes proposed by the district and internally, then we will move. Currently, we have comrades here not teachers.*

*Yes, ma'am...let me tell you my other frustration; we are in a country of democracy and operating in schools that are exposed to that. In Ekurhuleni South, facilitators know very well that my school is seriously vibrant in democratic practices. Unfortunately, these teachers are too liberal now, and that has got a negative impact towards our learner performance. But I'm working on that, madam. We will definitely come out of this situation."*

HOD-C gave the following statement that clearly indicates the negative impact that teacher unions are causing in some schools:

*The performance of learners will improve the day educationists become educationists and leave politics to politicians. The union keeps on interfering with teaching and learning. Usually, in term 2, they stop us from attending workshops. The site steward in our school is chasing subject advisors that come to our school to support us. We are disengaging and expect to have good results.....no.*

It also emerged that the introduction of ICT in schools was not supported by the old teachers, which led to a drop in performance in some classes. Principal-D explained this as follows,

*I have two different types of teachers in my staff, experienced teachers with quite a number of years being in the system and a number of years teaching in one school. Others are new teachers and young. Old teachers don't like the introduction of ICT in the school. Those teachers are hindering improvements concerning learner performance. The young teachers are finding ICT interesting and learners also love using these gadgets. Now there are results of development in the other phase..... but foundation phase is left behind.*

Based on the views of participants expressed above, complex challenges that are either positive or negative with regard to TPD have been identified. Participants viewed the introduction of ICT in schools and its implementation in classrooms as demoralising. Some teachers in these schools who were digitally-challenged viewed resignation as a preference to escape this challenging barrier. Already in 2001, Ingersoll (2001:22) noted that some teachers left the teaching profession for various reasons such as a lack of job satisfaction or a

desire to pursue a better job, a lack of support from the school administration, student discipline problems and a lack of teacher influence over decision-making.

The participants in School D also mentioned that they had new teachers that need pedagogical strategies as they only come to the teaching field with theoretical knowledge that is not coupled with didactics.

Teachers in intermediate and senior phases seem to be good implementers of ICT, which is yielding good results for learners. A lack of accountability in School E is a challenge that was mentioned by different participants in this school. Teacher resistance and a lack of interest in improving the culture of teaching and learning have a negative impact on learner performance. Zimmerman (2006:338) advocates that principals should identify the reasons that lead to resistance in teachers.

Anderson and Mundy (2014:3) concur with the participants of School A and School B that overcrowding and late submissions hinder TPD. Adequate facilities are central to effective teaching and learning in most subjects because they create a conducive teaching and learning environment. Teacher unions were also mentioned severally as entities that disrupt the programmes of development in School C. It was also noted that some teachers did not attend some workshops claiming to carry the mandate of the teacher union, South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU).

#### 4.4 A SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM PARTICIPANTS

##### TIME

- The afternoon timing for workshops is said to be ineffective as teachers claim to be tired.

##### DIGITAL LITERACY

- The introduction of ICT was found to be demoralising some teachers, particularly those who were old in the system. They were not properly developed on how to use ICT gadgets. They found themselves learning with learners.

##### OVERCROWDING

- Overcrowding leads to ill-discipline of learners in the classroom.
- Learners that need support are not supported due to overcrowding.

##### RESOURCES

- There is no money for teachers to attend some workshops.
- Some buildings are dilapidated and there is no money to fix them.
- There is no money to purchase mobile classes or to build them.

##### TEACHER UNIONS

- Some teachers do not attend workshops organised by the district as they are advised by SADTU not to attend, and they chase facilitators away from their schools.

##### MOTIVATION

- Lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in teachers causes lack of interest and yields negative learner performance. There is no teamwork either.

#### 4.5 EMERGING THEMES

The following themes emerged during the analysis of the responses during interviews conducted.

##### 4.5.1 Theme 1: Understanding Teacher Professional Development

Selected views from all the participants revealed their understanding of TPD. Although participants were drawn from different schools, they expressed similar sentiments about the concept. For instance, in their attempts to show their understanding, Principal-D used the words: *knowledge*, *skills* and *attitude*, while HOD-A viewed it as *capacity building*. In essence, both participants said the same thing using different words.

TPD is a continuous process, not a one-off event. In essence, teachers must improve their skills, knowledge and attitudes to improve learner performance (Mehreteab, 2015:65).

Dean (1991:1) and Du Toit (2001:327) maintain that TPD is an ongoing process, a continuous developmental activity, and an increase in some form of professionalism that includes inter alia, becoming a self-regulated, flexible, and reflective practitioner who can monitor his or her own learning in accordance with the demands of the teaching profession.

Furthermore, Principal-D explained TPD as follows: *“TPD is considered as a continuous process of upgrading knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers and students at school level. Thus, principals are expected to lead and play significant roles for the success of TPD.”*

Additionally, HOD-A stated: *“.....even though it’s not happening in my school, but I know teacher development is about continuous capacity building through various developmental strategies to enhance teaching and learning in our school.”*

#### **4.5.2 Theme 2: Strategies used for Teacher Professional Development**

Two participants from the 20 interviewed mentioned that the teachers’ personal growth plan informs the kind of support the teacher envisages. The data suggest that principals should be guided by SWOT analysis and personal growth plans in order to come up with relevant developmental strategies to address teachers’ needs. In this respect, Deputy Principal-B said: *“Teachers become demoralised if they are sent to a workshop that does not address their needs as per their indication in the growth plan.”*

HOD-B added: *“Each school has to conduct a SWOT analysis yearly [for] all staff members, interventions programmes therefore must address the swot analysis conducted.”*

#### **4.5.3 Theme 3: Challenges Faced in Teacher Professional Development**

Teacher unions, specifically SADTU were cited by a participant in School C as the perpetrator of non-compliance with respect to workshops and professional development activities organised by the district for teachers. They mentioned that by non-attendance of workshops organised by the district office, teachers were carrying out a mandate of SADTU as explained below.

Specifically, Teacher C explained,

*... most teachers in our school are SADTU members, my sister ... only those old teachers belong to other unions. When our deputy principal, our site steward says*

*we carry the mandate ... we don't attend any district workshops ... then we don't attend. When the mandate says we don't write provincial papers or we chase district officials out of the school, we carry [out] our union mandate.*

Akin to the situation portrayed above, teachers in School E seemed to forget their purpose of being in that school. It would seem that they did not support their superiors and this kind of behaviour affected the effective and efficient teaching and learning culture within the school (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth & Luppescu, 2010:59). Principal-E emphasised this as follows:

*These teachers act as if this school is their household ... omnye nomnye ufuna ukwenza umathanda (each and everyone wants to do as he or she pleases). They don't know that this is an institution, therefore they must account even with the processes of teaching and learning. They don't follow the ATPs when they teach they are always behind and [do] not [give] the reasons why they [are] behind, let alone drafting catch-up plans. They lack [a] sense of accountability...*

#### **4.5.4 Theme 4: Irrelevant Developmental Workshops**

Frowning, HOD-C indicated that the information that they get in the developmental workshops did not meet her expectations. She stated that her challenges were not the same as those of teachers from other schools. She also indicated that subject advisors lacked facilitation skills. She viewed these workshops as time wasters and poorly prepared. She disclosed her displeasure about the workshops thus,

*I don't like to attend the district workshops because they do not address the challenges that we face in schools. I think that they are calling teachers to workshops as a matter of doing it. The information I get most of the time is irrelevant to me. Some subject advisors lack facilitation skills. We are teachers from different schools, with different problems. They cannot do one-size-fits-all workshops. A workshop must develop me in my area of need. The district must not waste our time at all with unprepared workshops.*

#### **4.5.5 Theme 5: Time Management of Teacher Professional Development**

Teacher-C reported that the workshops organised by the district in the afternoon were not ideal because would be tired at that time as she was teaching an overcrowded class.

Consequently, she indicated that she did not attend because of being tired. She stated that she preferred developmental workshops typically organised during the school holidays. In her own words she stated thus,

*Ma'am, I am the culprit of non-attendance to of district workshops. Ma'am, attending workshops in the afternoon does not work for me. I have a class of 70 learners and its foundation phase. I work in that class up until I drop. By 14h00, I'm totally drained and truly exhausted. When I'm tired, ma'am, I switch off. The district must call these meetings during holidays at least, not after school. Our unions, most of the time, allow us to attend these workshops if the workshops were arranged three months prior the workshop.*

#### **4.5.6 Theme 6: Lack of Implementation**

HOD-E indicated that, in most cases, what they had learned at the district developmental forums was not implemented in her school. In part, this was attributed to the fact that, the teacher-learner ratio per class as indicated in PAM was way above the norm. She indicated that, under such conditions, it was difficult to implement recommendations successfully. She disclosed that she only attended the workshops to comply with the directives of school management as seen in the excerpt below.

*You will never see the impact of teacher professional development in this school because my phase does not implement what they are trained on. Our school is huge. The ratio in terms of [the] number of learners per class per teacher is forty. It is not the case in our school. Our classes are beyond being full. ... When they train us at the district, they do not take the context of our school into consideration. It's difficult to implement, but I attend their workshops just for compliance.*

#### **4.5.7 Theme 7: Intervention Measures on the Challenges Encountered**

None of the participants interviewed suggested any interventions; they instead focused on the challenges. School Principal-B mentioned the issue of unfavourable times at which district invited teachers to workshops thus:

*Our school is so big, number of learners are 80+ in our classes. It is difficult to function well in such an environment. The district office knows about this and nothing is*



*happening. When I enter my class, I know that I won't reach all the learners. We are sitting with this challenge without any help from the district. If it is difficult to implement what we are taught from the workshops.*

#### **4.5.8 Theme 8: The Impact of Teacher Professional Development**

Overall, the participants said that TPD made little or no impact on them. This is because, in most cases, teachers are trained and qualified for teaching and learning processes but not for any possible changes, for example changes in curriculum or new methodologies. They are not empty entities; however, they need development continuously so as to be abreast of new developments concerning curriculum implementation. They are fully responsible for what is happening in their classrooms. In their endeavours to ensure curriculum delivery, principals should support and facilitate alternative strategies as per the SWOT analysis of their schools to enhance teaching and learning. However, principal E showed the dilemma of this by asking the following question: *".....who is developing me so that I can develop my staff members? All fingers are pointing at me. I also need development, sisi."*

#### **4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented and analysed data on the role of school principals in TPD in Ekurhuleni South District. The findings discussed stemmed from the interviews and themes that emerged, which shed light on the phenomenon researched. The patterns on the responses of participants were noted and direct quotations used in the presentation and analysis of data. Some responses that emerged from the participants included the fact that most principals did not view the development of teachers in their schools as their responsibility. Some teachers reported that they did not attend some developmental workshops as they viewed them as irrelevant and time-wasting. Some teachers viewed the inconvenient times for those developmental workshops as a challenge, and therefore, they proposed that workshops should be held during school holidays rather than in the afternoons when they were tired. Non-implementation of the content acquired from the workshops was also identified as a challenge by some participants. This was linked to challenges like overcrowding of learners in class. Some participants cited the one-size-fits-all approach used in most workshops, inadequate facilitation skills and unprepared subject advisors as concerns. The next chapter

provides a summary of the study, the literature review explored in Chapter 2, conclusions and recommendations emanating from the research.

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the study was to explore how principals perceive and understand their roles in teacher development in schools of Ekurhuleni South region. This chapter presents the main findings of the research following the presentation and analysis of data in Chapter 4. Data for this study were generated from five principals, five deputy principals, five HODs and five teachers. This study sought to probe the role of principals in TPD in Ekurhuleni South District in order to determine if they initiate, support and manage it properly.

The study was based on the following research questions and sub-questions:

#### **5.2 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION**

What is the role of principals in teacher professional development in Ekurhuleni South Primary Schools?

##### **5.2.1 Sub-Questions**

- How do principals perceive their roles in TPD?
- What kind of professional development support do principals provide to teachers?
- What are the practices of principals concerning teacher development in their schools?
- What are the plans of principals for teachers regarding TPD in their schools?

#### **5.3 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

The study was divided into five chapters to answer the main research questions and sub-questions.

**Chapter 1** – The chapter covered the background to and rationale for the study, statement of the problem, the main research question and sub-questions, the aim and objectives of the study, and research methodology. This chapter also highlighted the challenges and confusion of principals concerning their role in TPD.

**Chapter 2** – The chapter reviewed literature related to this study and theoretical discussions underpinning the role of principals in TPD in schools. The significance of TPD and its relevance to principals were intensively discussed. The theoretical framework underpinning TPD and the leadership roles of principals were identified as social constructivism and connectivism. In this respect, different South African policy documents outlining the roles of principals in TPD were explored. Different strategies for TPD were also provided in this chapter.

**Chapter 3** – The chapter outlined and discussed the research design and methodology used in the study. It also discussed sampling strategies, data-collection instruments, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

**Chapter 4** – the chapter presented, analysed and discussed collected data. Participants' voices were also presented in this chapter by means of verbatim statements. Data were organised according to the following themes: the understanding of TPD, the strategies for TPD, the challenges of TPD, the intervention measures and the impact of TPD.

**Chapter 5** – This final chapter synthesises the findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

## **5.4 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Teachers are the key role players in schools whose main purpose is to deliver quality teaching and learning. They are the hub of content knowledge in their classrooms and enhance the academic performance of learners. They help learners gain knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in the process of effective teaching and learning.

In a school, the teacher's fundamental role is to provide quality education to students and communities. In this sense, investing in teachers through TPD may have more positive effects on individual learners and the school than investing in other physical resources (refer to Chapter 1)

To succeed, teachers need support and development from their principals. Principals are gatekeepers whose responsibility is to develop a positive atmosphere of professionalism. They are the drivers of effective professional development of staff. The school principal needs

to be a partner in the whole process of TPD by taking a lead and giving guidance where it is necessary.

## **5.5 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

### **5.5.1 Main Research Question: What is the Role of Principals in Teacher Professional Development?**

In terms of teaching experience, teachers need to upgrade their skills, change their attitudes, adapt to new settings and accommodate the use of new modified approaches and strategies in teaching. The study sought to find answers to the principals' role in TPD. In this study, principals are understood to be supervisors in the system, and therefore, are responsible for identifying, together with the teachers, the skills of teachers that require upgrading. Data from interviews indicated that, among others, teachers improve their skills through workshops organised by the district.

As indicated by the research findings, the aim of the workshops is to help teachers understand the curriculum in a better way for improved delivery, improve their pedagogical content knowledge, resolve teacher weaknesses, and create a platform for teachers to share experiences, which empowers them in their different positions. Although some of the strategies for improving teacher performance are as old as the teaching profession, the study revealed that workshops provide a platform for modifying old strategies. For example, group work is a traditional strategy that can be improved by integrating technology so that teachers do not have to be in one venue but can have their critical discussions via social media.

The findings of the study answered the research question posed above by indicating that principals attended meetings, which focused on needs identification, strategies on how to improve teacher performance, discussions on the viability of TPD programmes as well as the outcomes of specific programmes. For example, some participants highlighted the need to improve on chalkboard writing, a critical skill in the learning of languages. The meetings also involved planning for the training workshops and information-sharing sessions.

### **5.5.2 Sub-question 1: What are Principals' Perceptions of Teacher Professional Development?**

In responding to sub-question 1, it emerged that those principals who acted as supervisors were responsible for planning, organising, leading and controlling the teaching and learning process. In this regard, principals are deemed to be experts with leadership skills and experience needed to guide teachers' practice in the classroom. As the manager of the school, the principal should identify the training needs of teachers, plan the training programme, and prepare a training budget and identify facilitators as well as time needed for the training to be accomplished. This role of the principal is critical for any successful TPD in a school. The interview discussions revealed that the principals also evaluated their function in line with the DBE policy guidelines on school governance and TPD protocols.

### **5.5.3 Sub-question 2: What is the Nature of Principals' Support for Teacher Professional Development?**

The nature of principal support is within the framework of their official functions and roles. As mentioned in Chapter 2, theoretical and practical knowledge of the curriculum and experience as well as the needs of teachers help principals to determine the support needed for TPD. The findings of this study confirm that principals help with content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and adherence to policy frameworks, school management and other professional matters. In addition, the principals provide opportunities and time for training and discussions as well as meetings. The findings further suggest that, in some instances, principals work as facilitators and advisors on a number of curriculum issues. This role includes informing and updating teachers on issues such as new content in the syllabus, administration of assessments and school programmes. For example, one principal indicated that his role in TPD involved mentoring teachers on how to develop marking schemes for language subjects. The central argument here is that principals should attend to the needs of teachers in order to resolve all obstacles interfering with their work and improve their performance.

### **5.5.4 Sub-question 3: What are Principals' and Teachers' Plans in Teacher Professional Development?**

As part of their staff development endeavours, principals often plan to have continuous training programmes and use the information from evaluative programmes. In this regard,

some of the principals' responsibilities include the use of external service providers, encouraging teachers to upgrade their qualifications and providing digital connectivity platforms for teachers to participate and share best practices and experiences. Technological development such as social media like WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter is planned to assist teachers in professional development and in the sharing of good practices. In some schools, principals and teachers plan to have mentor teachers to support their colleagues, particularly teachers with specialised knowledge on certain topics. The plans can bring collaboration and teamwork, especially if the programme is incentivised.

Sub-question 1	Sub-question 2	Sub-question 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principals are managers who are responsible for the planning, organising, leading and controlling of the teaching and learning process.</li> <li>• Principals are experts with leadership skills and experience in order to guide the teachers' practices in class.</li> <li>• The principal as the manager of the school identifies the training needs of teachers, plans the training programme, and works on the budget and facilitators as well as time needed for the training to be accomplished.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principals help with content knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge, adherence to policy frameworks and other professional matters and administration.</li> <li>• Principals also provide opportunities and time for training and discussions as well as meetings.</li> <li>• Principals also work as facilitators and advisors to a number of curriculum issues; for example, informing and updating teachers on issues such as new content in the syllabus, administration of assessments and working in terms for the progress of the school programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging teachers to upgrade their qualifications and providing digital connectivity platforms for teachers to participate and share practices and experiences.</li> <li>• Technological development such as social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter) is planned to assist teachers in professional development and sharing of good practice.</li> <li>• Principals and teachers plan to have mentor teachers to support their colleagues particularly teachers with specialised knowledge on certain topics.</li> <li>• The plans can contribute to collaboration and team work especially if the programme is incentivised.</li> </ul>

Figure 5.1: Summary of sub-questions

## 5.6 MAIN THEMES EMERGING FROM THE STUDY

### 5.6.1 Theme 1: Understanding of Teacher Professional Development

This first theme indicates that TPD is broadly understood as an ongoing process of upgrading skills in teaching and learning. It also involves adapting to new settings, changes in the curriculum, approach to new content and integrating the use of technology in teaching. Data from all the participants revealed that they had similar understanding of what TPD is. They also indicated the purpose of professional development initiatives to individuals, namely, to

address different needs of teachers that can assist them to enhance teaching and learning in class.

### **5.6.2 Theme 2: Strategies used for Teacher Professional Development**

This second theme focused on the strategies used by the school principals for developmental purposes. The strategies include the use of workshops for identified needs, mentorship in teaching and learning, collaborative projects and recommendations for external support from universities and research institutes. Most participants stated that their principals did not organise workshops for them even when they voiced their challenges. Some participants said that their principals were not aware that TPD was their responsibility. Two principals mentioned that they also needed to be developed by their circuit managers. They claimed that they did not get training support from their circuit managers, and as such, they did not know how to develop teachers.

The participants reported that the workshops organised by the district office were the only strategy used for the professional development of teachers. It was disclosed that subject advisors invited teachers in the afternoons and conducted onsite interventions during school visits. However, the participants unsurprisingly indicated that the afternoons were inconvenient and they tended not to attend mainly because of fatigue after a long, busy day at school.

### **5.6.3 Theme 3: Challenges Faced in Teacher Professional Development**

Most principals, deputy principals, HODs and teachers who participated in the study maintained that they had challenges that hampered effective TPD. Among others, the participants mentioned the following as the most common barriers: a lack of money and digital literacy; overcrowding; ineffective time management; interference of teacher unions; and incompetence of some subject advisors. These participants voiced their frustrations and indicated that even if they understood the importance of TPD, it was not possible to implement it without money.

Some teachers in the foundation phase indicated that they had a challenge with computers. Understandably, they said this in the context of the introduction of technology and paperless classes in Gauteng, which is gradually causing them to be redundant in classrooms. As a



result, teachers found themselves learning with learners, as they did not get proper training on how to use the technological gadgets provided in their classes. Indisputably, TPD enhances teaching and learning in class, which eventually leads to improved learner achievement. However, overcrowding has a major negative impact on the implementation of what teachers learned at the workshops organised by the district office.

#### **5.6.4 Theme 4: Irrelevant Developmental Workshops**

Some teachers viewed the district developmental workshops as time-wasters. They indicated that some workshops did not address their needs as individuals. The primary goal of workshops should be to provide the best professional training for teachers in order to meet the new pedagogical demands. However, according to teachers, the content in training sessions is common and it is delivered using a one-size-fits-all approach. As Addler and Reed (2002:130) observed, developmental workshops are important not only to improve teachers' knowledge and skills, but also to establish interpersonal relationships and overcome gaps in teaching practice. These workshops are not contextualised to their teaching and learning environment in schools. As a result, their developmental needs remain unanswered by their school principals and districts.

#### **5.6.5 Theme 5: Time Management**

The district developmental forum workshops are mostly conducted after school hours, between 14h30-16h00. Most teachers attend workshops for different reasons, which include being obliged to do so by their principals and a need for professional development in certain areas of the curriculum or profession. Some principals indicated that the district often invited them to attend workshops. As indicated above, the afternoon workshops were said to be a futile exercise because they were conducted at a time when teachers were exhausted. Some teacher unions even agitated for their non-attendance.

#### **5.6.6 Theme 6: Lack of Implementation**

The teachers' inability to practise adequately what they acquired during the training workshops is a source of stress. This could be attributed to limited resources, a diverse learner population and overcrowding in classrooms which caused stress for teachers. Professional development yields better results and improved learner performance when it is aligned to

relevant curriculum materials that teachers use for teaching and learning, higher academic standards, which drive their work, and accountability measures that indicate their proficiency.

## **5.7 CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter has discussed the research findings, which revealed that there are limited TPD opportunities for teachers in the Ekurhuleni South district.

The findings of the study revealed that teacher development depends on the availability of funds since teachers need money to attend workshops. A lack of money to attend workshops leads to poor academic performance since it deprives teachers of the opportunity to acquire new knowledge, skills and methodologies from the district education office.

The challenge of overcrowding was cited by almost all the participants and I observed this during my visits to schools as the subject advisor in the district and during fieldwork. Some teachers indicated that it was difficult to implement some of the teaching and learning strategies they had acquired at the workshops in their classes because of overcrowding. In this regard, a teacher at one school indicated that her class was no longer a class, but a stadium.

A lack of resources that enhance pedagogical content during teaching and learning is a major barrier in some schools. The implementation of what has been learned at the workshops in schools seems to be a daunting task for many teachers due to lack of resources. The study has established that novice teachers become the pioneers of digital literacy in their respective classes, while teachers that were in the system before computers were introduced in schools struggle with the use of digital media. Overcrowding of classes in informal settlement schools has been a long-standing challenge according to some HODs.

These teachers indicated that they were doing their best under those circumstances with the hope that they would receive mobile classrooms as promised by the DBE. The study also found that the attendance at workshops was also affected by these contextual factors, the interference of teacher unions and incapacity of some subject advisors.

Most participants who had sponsored gadgets in their schools complained that they lacked necessary digital literacy to use them for teaching and learning. It emerged that it was mostly

younger novice teachers who were comfortable with the utilisation of technological gadgets. In some schools, the tablets were not enough for all learners.

Due to a lack of digital literacy and knowledge on how to use the technological gadgets in class, teachers found themselves learning with learners. This was compounded by the fact that some subject advisors also did not assist in this regard, as they had little or no knowledge of using ICT in the classroom, especially in the foundation phase.

## **5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The main purpose of this research was to understand the role of school principals in TPD. Based on the literature review and interviews conducted in this study, the following recommendations are proposed for improving the leadership and pedagogical role of principals in TPD.

### **5.8.1 Strategies by Principals for Teacher Professional Development**

TPD is a vehicle that enhances teaching and learning in class, and in the end, it influences learner performance. For this to happen, the conditions stated below are vital:

- Principals should conduct in-service training within the school that is informed by the school improvement plan.
- Professional learning communities can be developed where teachers can meet regularly, share expertise, and work collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of learners. Greater use of social media should be encouraged.
- In the event where an expert is needed in a special subject, the principal can invite a district subject specialist to run a pedagogical workshop to assist teachers.
- Peer coaching is also a good strategy that can be used by the principal, where novice teachers can be paired with experienced teachers. In the pairing of these teachers, individual needs should be identified and addressed through the expertise of the experienced peer-teacher.
- Support to teachers and follow-ups to monitor the implementation and improvement should be conducted on an ongoing basis rather than once-off training.

### **5.8.2 Challenges Faced in Teacher Professional Development**

In order to ensure that teachers attend training workshops and professional development initiatives, the following recommendations are made:

#### **5.8.2.1 Funding resources**

- The SGB should assist teachers in raising funds for the transport of teachers to workshops. In terms of section 36(1) of the South African Schools Act, the school governing body is entitled to raise funds, in legal ways, in order to supplement the financial resources that the state gives to schools so as to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
- There is a need for a well-established fundraising committee, which should work in collaboration with parents and project committees to request donations from local businesses to purchase resources.
- Schools could approach local business people to assist where the resources are in short supply.
- Other strategies that could be pursued include projects such as ‘one learner, one brick’ with the motivation and support of teachers, especially in the foundation phase.
- Another strategy that can be used to raise funds for the construction of classrooms is to rent out school classrooms and halls to churches and for other functions.
- Parents with skills in construction could be encouraged to volunteer in building additional classrooms at an affordable cost.
- Workshops organised by the district should be conducted in each circuit closer to teachers.

5.8.2.2 Digital literacy to address problems with digital literacy, the following strategies are proposed:

- Experienced teachers need development and intensive training on how to utilise technological tools for teaching.
- In cases where the district officials cannot assist, the school should engage the skilled service providers to train teachers on the use of technological gadgets for teaching and learning.

- Unemployed graduates who are appropriately qualified should be encouraged to volunteer to assist with the use of technological gadgets, as most of them know how to use them.

#### **5.9 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

- In this study, the non-conducive school environments can be a contributing factor to poor performance of both teachers and learners, lack of culture of teaching and learning and, above all, non-constructive, purposive and effective monitoring and support of teachers by their SMT. Therefore, I recommend that further research be undertaken on how these factors affect learners' performance at Ekurhuleni South District.
- Further research could be conducted on how to build healthy pedagogical conversation among teachers and the entire SMT.
- Further research could be conducted on ways to close the gap between teachers and principals in terms of conducting TPD within the school, forming collaborative structures that can stimulate the personal interest of teachers in curriculum delivery and motivate all staff members.
- Research could also be conducted on the capacitation of principals on pedagogical matters by the district subject advisors and cluster leaders.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**12 SAND ROAD**

Klippoortjie

Germiston

1401

28 April 2017

The Director

Department of Education

Head Office

Johannesburg

Dear Sir or Madam

#### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT EKURHULENI SOUTH DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

I am a student studying at UNISA in order to obtain a Master's Degree in Education Management and am working in Ekurhuleni South District. I am currently in the process of conducting a research study titled: **The Role of Principals in Teacher Professional Development at Ekurhuleni South District.**

The aim of this study is to understand the role of principals in teacher professional development. In order to gain the understanding, the researcher needs to have access to primary schools in Ekurhuleni South District and interview the principals, deputy principals, HODs and teachers. The researcher also needs to collect data through observation of principals and teachers in the teacher professional development sessions as well examining the documents. Data compiled will be interpreted and analysed according to themes and patterns. The final research report and data collected will be kept in archival system and a copy will be submitted to the DBE upon completion.

I therefore kindly ask for permission to access the primary schools selected for the study. I will adhere to all ethical requirements as recommended by the Department of Basic Education and University of South Africa. Kindly contact my supervisor for any concerns: Prof Lekhetho at 012 4293781 or [lekhem@unisa.ac.za](mailto:lekhem@unisa.ac.za) or Linda Gwele at 0844979747 or [lindagwele@gmail.com](mailto:lindagwele@gmail.com).

Your assistance in this regard will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

.....

B.L Gwele (Ms)

Cell No.: 084 497 9747

E-mail address: [lindagwele@gmail.com](mailto:lindagwele@gmail.com)

## APPENDIX B: APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



### GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department of Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

### GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	27 March 2017
Validity of Research Approval:	06 February 2017 – 29 September 2017 2017/42
Name of Researcher:	Gwele B.L.
Address of Researcher:	12 Sand Street Klipportjie Germiston, 1401
Telephone Number:	011 389 6288      084 497 9747
Email address:	lindagwele@gmail.com
Research Topic:	The role of Primary School principals in teacher professional development in Gauteng
Number and type of schools:	Ten Primary Schools
District/s/HQ	Ekurhuleni South

### Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

*Handwritten signature and date: 27/03/2017*

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1

*Making education a societal priority*

### Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

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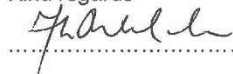
Website: [www.education.gov.za](http://www.education.gov.za)

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
12. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Ms Faith Tshabalala  
CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 27/03/2017

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## APPENDIX C: A LETTER TO THE PRINCIPALS REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOLS

12 Sand Road  
Klippoortjie  
Germiston  
1401  
28 April 2017

The Principal

.....Primary School

.....

.....

.....

Dear Sir/Madam

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am a student studying at UNISA in order to obtain a Master's Degree in Education Management and am working in Ekurhuleni South District. I am currently in the process of conducting a research project on **The Role of Principals in Teacher Professional Development at Ekurhuleni South District.**

The aim of this study is to understand the role of principals in teacher professional development. Your school has been selected for participation for this crucial study, which seeks to understand how principals implement teacher professional development programmes in order to improve teacher performance and learner achievement. The researcher will interview the school principal, the deputy principal, one HOD and a teacher. The researcher will also teachers and principals during teacher professional development workshop in your school, training manuals, evaluation reports and feedback forms will be examined as part of data-collection process.

Data compiled will be interpreted and analysed according to themes and patterns. The final research report and data collected will be kept in archival system and a copy will be submitted to the Department of Basic Education upon completion.

I therefore kindly ask for permission to access the primary schools selected for the study. I will adhere to all ethical requirements as recommended by the Department of Basic Education and University of South Africa. Kindly contact my supervisor for any concerns: Prof Lekhetho at 0124293781 or lekhem@unisa.ac.za or Linda Gwele at 0844979747 or lindagwele@gmail.com.

Yours sincerely,

.....

B.L Gwele (Ms)

Cell No.: 084 497 9747

E-mail address: [lindagwele@gmail.com](mailto:lindagwele@gmail.com)

## APPENDIX D: A LETTER TO THE PARTICIPANTS REQUESTING THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

12 Sand Street  
Klippoortjie  
Germiston  
1401

27 March 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

.....

### RE: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I hereby request you to voluntarily participate in an academic research which I will conduct at your school. I am a Masters' Degree (Educational Management) student working on a dissertation with the title: **The Role of Principals in Teacher Professional Development at Ekurhuleni South District.**

I hereby request you to participate in the research. The research will be conducted in the strictest confidentiality and your name will not appear in any document. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from participation at any time without any negative consequences, and the data would be destroyed should you withdraw. Please be assured that all information will be treated with the strictest confidence and your personal particulars will not be divulged to any person. Your identification will be protected as I will use a pseudonym when referring to you. A pseudonym is another name which will be used in order to protect your identity.

The aim of this interview is to seek evidence regarding the role of principals in teacher professional development in your school. As part of my research, I am trying to develop a model that will assist in improving teacher professional development.

If you have any inquiry, you are free to contact me telephonically at 084 497 9747. If you are willing to take part in this study, please complete the attached consent form. I will appreciate your time taken to participate in this study.

Thanking you in advance

Yours Faithfully

.....

B.L Gwele (Ms)

Cell No.: 084 497 974

E-mail address: [lindagwele@gmail.com](mailto:lindagwele@gmail.com)

## **APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM**

1. I hereby give free and informed consent to participate in the abovementioned research study.
2. I understand what the study is about, why I am participating and that there are no risks anticipated in my participation.
3. I also give the researcher permission to make use of the data gathered from my participation, subject to the stipulations he/she has indicated in the above letter.

Signature of the Principal/ Deputy Principal/ HODs / Teacher: .....

Name and signature of the researcher: .....

Date: .....

## **APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE PRINCIPALS**

### **The role of principals in teacher professional development at Ekurhuleni South District**

Dear Principal

Thank you for being involved in this study. The purpose of this interview is to gather information about the understanding you have in terms of your role in teacher professional development specifically in your school. I regard you as someone who can provide such detailed information. However, please note that although you are regarded as someone who is likely to provide detailed information, you are under no obligation to participate in the interview and can therefore choose not to be interviewed. Kindly note that even though I will be switched on during the interview to ensure that as much information as possible is captured. Also note that all information will be treated confidentially. Please do hesitate to ask any questions regarding what I have just explained. All interviews will be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted.

Do you agree/ disagree to be interviewed?

Thank you for agreeing/ disagreeing to be interviewed

If you are willing to participate in the interview kindly note and remember the following:

- You are allowed to ask me to repeat or rephrased a question, where necessary.
- Please answer questions as honestly as possible. There is no right or wrong answer but honest opinions will be appreciated.

Please tell me about your opinion on the role of a principal in teacher professional development in your school:

1. In your own understanding what is the significance of teacher professional development.
2. What is your involvement in the development of teachers as a principal?
3. What developmental programmes have been conducted and what was your input?
4. What is the impact of those developmental sessions? Please elaborate.

5. Do you outsource the programmes of teacher professional development or you conduct them?

## **APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE HOD/DEPUTY PRINCIPAL**

### **The Role of Principals in Teacher Professional Development at Ekurhuleni South District**

I would like to thank you HOD/Deputy Principal for participating in this study. The purpose of this interview is to get the detailed information about your overall impression regarding the role of principal on teacher professional development in your school. I therefore regard you as someone who can provide such detailed, rich and valuable information in this study.

Please note that your participation is completely voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You may withdraw your participation at any time for any reason without penalty. If you participate, please allow me to assure you of your anonymity and the confidentiality with which your views, comments and opinions will be treated. So please feel free to participate with ease. I really do value your honest contribution. Please note that interviews will be only conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted.

The voice recorder will be switched on during the interview to ensure that all the information is captured. Please do hesitate to ask any question concerning what I have just explained.

Do you agree/ disagree to participate in a tape recorded interview?

If you are willing to participate in the interview kindly note and remember the following:

- You are allowed to ask me to repeat or rephrase a question, where necessary.
- Please answer as honestly as possible, and note that there is no right and wrong answer but only your honest opinion will be appreciated.

Please tell me about your experiences on the role of the principal on teacher professional development:

1. What is your opinion on teacher professional development?
2. Does the teacher professional development address challenges that you encounter during teaching and learning in your class? Briefly explain.
3. To what extent does the teacher professional development assist you to address those challenges?



4. Do you view teacher professional development as a need in your school? In your own opinion whom do you view as personnel that can conduct teacher professional development programs?
5. What is the impact of your principal's involvement in teacher professional development?

## **APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE TEACHERS**

### **The Role of Principals in Teacher Professional Development at Ekurhuleni South District**

I would like to thank you educators for participating in this study. The purpose of this interview is to get the detailed information about your overall impression regarding the role of principal on teacher professional development in your school. I therefore regard you as someone who can provide such detailed, rich and valuable information in this study.

Please note that your participation is completely voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You may withdraw your participation at any time for any reason without penalty. If you participate, please allow me to assure you of your anonymity and the confidentiality with which your views, comments and opinions will be treated. So please feel free to participate with ease. I really do value your honest contribution. Please note that interviews will be only conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted.

The voice recorder will be switched on during the interview to ensure that all the information is captured. Please do hesitate to ask any question concerning what I have just explained.

Do you agree/ disagree to participate in a audio-recorded interview?

If you are willing to participate in the interview kindly note and remember the following:

- You are allowed to ask me to repeat or rephrase a question, where necessary.
- Please answer as honestly as possible, and note that there is no right and wrong answer but only your honest opinion will be appreciated.

Please tell me about your experiences on the role of the principal on teacher professional development:

1. According to your own understanding, what is the ultimate purpose of teacher professional development?
2. Briefly explain how teacher professional development is conducted in your school?
3. What are the effects of teacher professional development in quality teaching and learning?

4. What strategies of teacher professional development do you prefer? Please elaborate
5. Does teacher professional development benefit learners? How.

How do structures constituted to develop you assist in your continued professional growth?